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THE BOOKMAN

BOOK SERVICE TO MAIN STREET

By Mary Austin

EVERY now and then one discovers a disposition on the part of people who for one reason or another are unable to see American life any way but objectively, to wag the head over the numbers of foreign celebrities who have recently been fattening on our lecture circuits. Foreign celebrities themselves are disposed to wink the eye, thereby displaying an insurmountable incapacity to understand American life.

For never did the American people take European culture with less seriousness; this being the reason why they are willing to take so much of it. Once away from the cities where opinion is more or less conditioned by the culture market, it is possible to discover that the sudden interest in the European celebrity is largely due to our no longer being afraid of him. The great American public begins to feel itself. It no longer fears to be whelmed by speculative contemplation of an alien culture, nor embarrassed by want of rapport with it.

As the result of a culture survey carried on during the past three years in three-quarters of the American map, the writer has come to two unshakable conclusions. One is that there is a very definite realization on the part of the people in Oregon and Minnesota and New Mexico that the umbilical cord of our derived culture has ceased to pulse.

This is probably not the case in New York, but the farther one goes from New York the more one is assured that the spiritual rebirth which was prophesied has taken place. Like all normal births it is obscure in its processes, and it will be long before the expression of it becomes articulate. Everywhere, on the part of audiences, there was an ungrudged and equally undemonstrative consciousness of Something that has recently come among us. Something as yet without a name. In the eye that has been turned on the European poets and playwrights trecking across the American scene, there is the young parent's

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speculation. There is even an amount of private determination that whatever the youngster grows up to, it will be something extremely unlike that! Apparently we are about to go in for a native culture with the same wholeheartedness with which we abandoned ourselves to the search for "modern conveniences".

The second of these inescapable conclusions has been that the culture of the coming generation will be a culture of small communities, communities of twenty thousand and less. To the average American such a statement needs no explication. Though he hears of them first in the cities where they have gone to market their product, he recognizes the prophets of national life as fellow townsmen. Even in their abuse—and who does not abuse the small town nowadays?—there is too much of noble fury not to spring from an equally furious devotion.

What then is the equipment of the small town from which we are to expect an expression of our national culture? One thinks at once of the arts; the theatre, pictures, music, books. A very little study, singularly, convinces one that there are more adequate facilities for the communication of all that has been expressed by any of these than for the things that can only be expressed in books.

The phonographic record combined with salesmanship makes the music of the world possible to the most isolated community. Last summer in the Non-Partisan League country I could not discover a farmhouse which had not from one to five musical instruments; and in the Plains States the musical festival has attained a level not achieved anywhere outside of three or four large cities. In the lonely Spanish-speaking hamlets of the southwest I saw beautiful, naive old tempera paintings, discoverable only in museums elsewhere, and excellent modern reproductions of the best Italian and Spanish art. In the unlikeliest places the traveling picture exhibition finds room and appreciation. The community theatre leaves nothing unattempted. In a wheat-growing town of the northwest last season, thousands of people stood in the streets around three harvester trucks improvised into a pageant stage. Flat cars have also been utilized by the Little Country Theatre. The California coast boasts any number of small open air theatres ranging from natural redwood amphitheatres to concrete structures of Greek perfection. In all these places opportunities for the enjoyment of books are wofully inadequate.

Let us begin the explanation of this condition by admitting that, as a people, we are more given to satisfaction of sensation than to intellectual curiosity. Unhappily most of our educational institutions, and all of the commercial ones, are disposed to coddle our intellectual inertia rather than to assist in overcoming it. But it is also an unavoidable conclusion that American communities have come more than half the distance that has already been overcome, and that it is the educational and commercial institutions that are lagging.

On both sides there is a heavy incrustation of tradition about the reading and making of books. Actually almost the only modern concession on the part of the book making trades, is of size and handiness. Otherwise book material is set forth very much as it was in the fourteenth century, when books were made for a leisure class, for aristocrats, monks, and professional scholars. The enormous acces-

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sion of women readers has not brought about any modification of presentation, called for by distinctive variations of the woman's approach. Least of all has there been any concession to the enormous increase in eyestrain due to the use of print for business communication, railway and directory information, traffic instruction, and, finally, to the unintermittent assault of advertising. Some day we are going to wake up to the enormity of the daily theft of eye power to which the commercial world exposes us from every available surface. We have ignored it too long as a factor in the print weariness which I am persuaded has much to do with our American reluctance toward the act of reading for general culture.

In spite of these things there is scarcely a town of more than five thousand inhabitants which has not achieved some kind of library, where by self-directed diligence one may become acquainted with the best of what was written before 1890, and the most popular of what has appeared since. By persistent borrowing and exchange it is possible to know something of the best current fiction, and on the same terms to keep within two or three months of the leading magazines. But such possibilities are open only to members of the small group who are socially and financially in touch with the outside world. What is left to others may be indicated by a summary of book conditions in three of the widely separated towns studied.

A is a California coast town of less than a thousand population, which number is considerably augmented during the summer season. It has a flourishing community theatre, a moving picture house giving three performances a week, an art centre with a good exhibition room which is also a lecture auditorium, a five-piece band, a music club, a notable teacher of dancing. Its library though excellently managed and fairly well provided with magazines, consists of about three hundred volumes, mostly of the sort which people contribute because they have no further use for them. There is no book market, though the local stationer will order books when requested (seldom requested owing to the necessity of waiting two or three weeks for them to be forwarded from New York). A few popular magazines are on sale.

The town of B in Texas has a drama club which presents several plays a year, an exhibition room for pictures, a moving picture house, a ten-piece band, a string quartet, a community chorus, a branch of the state historical society, three women's clubs, a men's debating society, and a well patronized club. This town has about eight thousand inhabitants. Its library is managed by one of the women's clubs, with a few hundred well selected books, a few hundred more miscellaneous and nearly useless contributions, and three hundred volumes of history and science willed to them under such restrictions as virtually inhibit their usefulness.

I may say in passing that traditionalism in the use of books has operated against the success of almost every library legacy I have ever heard of, but that this condition is now being met by community councils and trusts which offer indispensable advice in advance. Another condition which reduced the benefits of the library to a minimum in this case and others, is the impossibility of providing competent librarians.

In the town of B there is no bookshop, but a few indifferent volumes were on sale at the drug store. At the

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two news stands in B there were altogether nine copies of magazines such as contain book news and book advertisements regularly offered for sale. So that the greater part of the eight thousand inhabitants had to depend, for all knowledge of what was going on in the book world, on periodicals privately subscribed for.

At C, in the wheat-growing region, the thirty-five hundred inhabitants had neither library nor book store, and nothing but a single copy each of "The Nation" and "The New Republic" at the news stands to tell them about books. They had a woman's club, a men's current events club, a band, and an annual pageant to which people came from all the surrounding towns. They participated as a community in the music festival of a neighboring town, and had moving pictures three times a week. Thus they were quite hopeless in the matter of books until Mrs. Caldwell became a widow and opened a tea room, supplemented, as small town tea rooms have to be, by various catchpenny devices. One of these happened to be a circulating library of fiction. The patrons paid five cents for the privilege, and a cent a day for the use of the book, which was generally retained until all the family had read it. Eight or ten leasings paid for the book; the rest were clear profit; and even at the last when the book was too limp to circulate, it could be sold to motor tourists who were willing to buy fiction that involved no responsibility for the care of the book.

In the second year of the tea room, a visiting celebrity persuaded Mrs. Caldwell to order a few copies of his books. In the light of this experience, she began to put her intimate knowledge of the town to use. She kept a little list of birthdays and anniversaries and was always at hand in time with just the right suggestion of a book for the Doctor, or for Sammy's birthday or the twins' Christmas. To be brief, the tea room bookshop became a successful institution, growing with the growth of the community.

I have enlarged upon this because it illustrates the only possible successful book service for small towns, intimate and personal, springing out of the instinct for service rather than the narrow commercial instinct, or the even narrower and more unserviceable "literary" instinct. One other example I met of the same kind, a lame woman in a small mining town building up a circulating library of two hundred volumes out of the desire to have some sort of experience which she could share with the community.

Of the three methods of approach to the problem of book distribution, I should say unhesitatingly that the "literary" is the least to be recommended. There is no place in the small town for the handler of books for the books' sake. This sort of thing is too often egocentric, an effort to mask the lack of any genuine contributive gift.

Increasingly, however, as one feels the consciousness of an American culture that knows what it wants with a sureness that makes it superior to its own inarticulateness, one feels also that it is too much to expect the small town to come all the way. The gap between it and the centres of book making is too wide to be covered in that fashion. Something definitive must come from the publishing trades. Books must be put together with some understanding of the changed conditions of reading. They must be distributed with an eye to the changing distribution of the reading population.

Perhaps the greatest gap occurs at

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present in the circulation of book news. Traditionalism in this department results in overlapping rings of announcement which die out long before they have carried any significance whatever to the bulk of the population, and are muffled by new and equally unprovocative announcements.

It would be interesting to trace the origin of that tradition of book advertising which decreed that the publisher's notice should bear to the book the same relation that the headline of the newspaper bears to the news. This might be a legitimate relation if all books were directed toward the satisfaction of the hunger for sensation. But just the conditions I have been describing indicate that such hunger, legitimate enough in itself, is largely met by the moving picture houses, by music and drama and the possibilities of color reproduction. Perhaps the greatest need of the small town reader at present is exemplified in the interest taken everywhere, even by people who cannot afford to buy it, in Mr. Wells's "The Outline of History". This indicates a need for books which unify and set in order the chaos of information with which our educational system floods us. This need for making a neat and handy package of the past is one of the evidences, along with our sudden interest in the personal product of that past, of our being about to put it definitely out of the question. What the average thoughtful American wants most to hear about books just now is not that they are "startling", "gripping", or even that they are of superlative literary quality. What he really wants to know is whether the particular book has anything in it which will be of use to him for any longer than the day after tomorrow.

The real truth about many American books is that they haven't this lasting usefulness. And the responsibility for this lack must be shared pretty evenly between the publishers and editors on one hand and the authors on the other. The books any author writes are selections from the number that he might produce under proper incentive. The least sordid, the most inspiring incentive for any writer is the certainty of an audience in waiting. But unless the publisher and editor understand and can locate this audience with even more certainty than the writer, he is not likely to be able to persuade them.

The United States is a fine, large place. Tucked away in it are audiences of great variety and adequate purchasing power who lack a prophet, or at any events lack a proper go-between to put them in touch with whatever prophets exist. Who, for instance, can go freely about in the west and north and not be thrilled by the slow, secret turning of a great people, following the immemorial pull of the structural ranges, facing west? But who would undertake to convince a New York editor or publisher that the deep-seated cultural interests of people always follow the trend of the mountain ranges, and that the same influences which pulled the first Americans out of the heart of Asia are now reorganizing American interests toward absorbing contacts, liaisons, and antagonisms with the east? Or who on that premise would undertake to advise about the kind of book on the Orient that within the next five years is going to be demanded by the reading public? It is not possible to establish complete cultural communication between the members of the American continent where there still exist such enormous gaps of mere acquaintance.

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THE SEA—AND CONRAD

By William McFee

Sketches by Herb Roth

IT was Francis Grierson, some ten years ago, in a brief article in "The New Age", who first called attention to the very remarkable qualities of a book called "The Nigger of the Narcissus", just then published by Heinemann at a shilling. It was a slim, scarlet, easily-held book, designed to read in bed, pack in a grip, lend to a friend, or slip in the pocket against a rail journey in the middle of the day, when the morning paper had been read and the evening journals were not yet on the stands. It may have been by design that this article came out just at that moment, for Heinemann was an admirable tactician. Bad literature was abhorrent to him, as may be seen by the books bearing his imprimatur; but he doubtless saw no reason why a man who published fine books should not let it get about, or should refrain from mentioning it in a friendly way. It may be remarked that a number of English publishers at that time were in the habit of issuing books in a manner that can only be described as virtuously surreptitious. They did good by stealth. It would not do to say that any house ever published a book without informing its shipping department, but it amounted to that in the long run. Mr. Heinemann was not that sort of publisher. Francis Grierson's article appeared in "The New Age"; the slim red book appeared in the book stores; and a new light shone before the present writer. For the first time in his life he became aware of the existence of a writer named Conrad.

It was an extraordinary experience. It was also a very chastening one. For the present writer had not only written but published a book of his own, dealing with the sea and with seamen. He had grown up in a genuine tradition of the mercantile marine. Sea captains had been so close to him all his life that he accepted them as part of the surrounding landscape. A long period of literary and artistic gestation in Chelsea had somewhat alienated him from the rich humanity of his seafaring relatives. And here in "The Nigger of the Narcissus" he found them again transfigured to heroic dimensions, like the sombre and enormous shadows of grownups on the nursery wall.

It was in Glasgow on an evening in late summer that the present writer walked along Sauchiehall Street and, turning down Radnor and Finniestonn Streets, entered the Queen's Dock, where his ship lay. "The Nigger of the Narcissus" was under his arm. The rays of the setting sun still threw a twilight and roseate glamor over the interminable ridge of the Hills of Old Kilpatrick; and with the story of the "Nigger" yet vibrating in his brain, he made his way up the gangway and descended the short ladder to the iron deck of the elderly freighter. It is not too much to say that he regarded her

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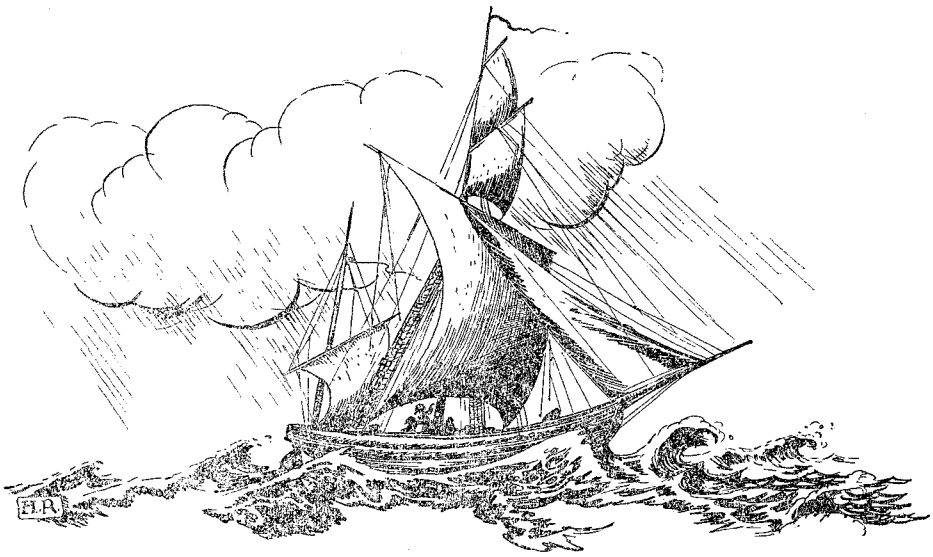

shapely old hull and comfortable quarters with profound affection. Built some fifteen years before for the nine-knot Australian trade, she was now relegated to the shorter voyages to the Mediterranean. We had been a long time together, commander, mates, engineers, including the donkeyman, the carpenter, and the engine-storekeeper. The last three were much more like the characters in a dream play than quick active seamen. The donkeyman was a Turk and lived in a sort of solitary and immaculate retirement in a three-cornered cabin in the forecastle. The carpenter was a Norwegian, and haunted the steering-house aft, where he shut himself up and fashioned models of fabulous sailing ships. The storekeeper, who owned to the entirely inadequate name of Frank Freshwater, was a willing and diminutive Englishman with a large nose and an immense military moustache. He was known to speak to both donkeyman and chips, and in fact may have been created for the sole purpose of communicating between them; but even that degree of loquacity dried up on nearing Glasgow. He was the sad proprietor of a ferocious virago who would appear on the quay with miraculous promptitude the moment the gangway slid over, and wait relentlessly for him to appear. He never did appear, it is necessary to add. The whole ship's company became enthusiastic sporting accessories to the fact of poor old Freshwater's unobtrusive escape, while some hardened married man goaded the virago to paroxysms of absurd rage, until the dock policeman walked stolidly in our direction, preening his moustache.

And the principal bond between all of us there on that ship was a very honest liking for the chief. The Turk once said to the present writer who was second engineer at the time, *"Ze cheef, ee iz my fazzer"*—and was so prostrated with that display of dramatic and emotional volubility that he did not speak again for a fortnight—unless he talked to himself. To Frank Freshwater the chief presented another and equally admirable facet:

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"One of the truest men who ever stood in shoe-leather." Frank's estimate is quoted because it was a very accurate description. The chief was just that. And as the present writer came aboard with "The Nigger of the Narcissus" under his arm, he beheld the burly form of the chief, standing by the door of the port alleyway, stripped to the waist, his large pale hairy arms folded, his bosom screened from view by his patriarchal beard, smoking a cigarette in the end of a long black holder.

"Well," said he, taking the holder from his lips and looking down at the great curve of his abdomen, "did you have a good time?"

Simple words, expressing a simple kindly consideration; yet by virtue of the magical tale just read, the present writer saw those words in a new and enchanting light. He saw perhaps for the first time in his literary life the true function of dialogue as a resonant and plangent element through which the forms and characters of men can be projected upon the retina of the reader. He became aware of a more subtle music in the very shape and timbre of the long-familiar phrases. And behind the amiable superior and valuable shipmate he suddenly saw that quiet, attentive, bearded man as a character in a book, the unconscious victim of a future work of art.

This is a great stride in life—to get behind the switchboard, as one may say, and see even for a brief illuminating moment the various resistances and insulations, the connection to earth, without which one's impact upon humanity is a floating foolish pose. The author who does this for you is forever memorable, quite apart from his intrinsic value to the public.

I said, "Yes, I had a good time." And I added with a curious feeling of diffident exultation, "I have a book here I would like you to read. It seems to me rather good."

He took it and at once made that faint and somewhat vague gesture which invariably accompanied a gentle murmur of apology about his glasses. Turning to the low door leading to his room, we passed in. There was no dynamo on that ship, and a study-lamp with a brown shade stood on a little desk by the settee. Adjusting a pair of spectacles on his nose, the chief opened the book and began to read the title-page. He stood there—a remarkable nude figure with his shining bald head and venerable beard—holding the volume at arm's length and looking down through his glasses with severe attention. The first page and the second were read and turned, and he never moved.

So I left him and went round to my cabin on the starboard side. The ship was moving under the coal-tips early next morning, and it was due to this that some time after midnight I was still about, and noticed the light still burning in his room. I went in. He was standing there turning the last immortal pages. He had put on an old patrol coat and had buttoned it absently over his beard. I have often thought that Conrad must have met him somewhere: he is so exactly presented in "Heart of Darkness" as the amiable engineer of the river boat who put his beard in a bag to keep it clean. The discerning will recall that person's bald head, whose hair—Conrad whimsically observes—had fallen to his chin, where it had prospered. He lowered his head and looked at me over his glasses as I made some professional remark, and laid the book down.

"A funny thing," he observed in his quiet precise voice. "This nigger says

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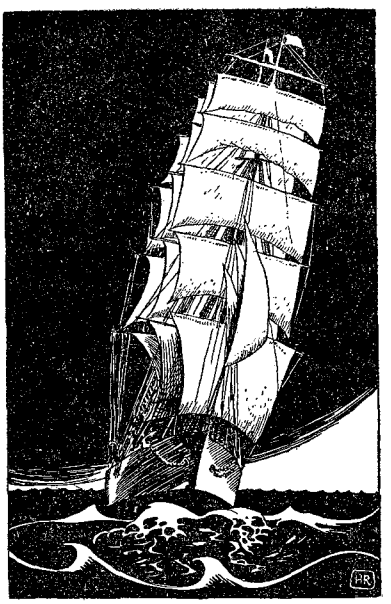
a girl chucked the third engineer of a Rennie boat for him." He stroked his beard with a broad powerful palm. "You know, *I* was third of a Rennie boat in my young days." He meditated for a moment and added, "That book makes you feel, somehow."

A notable reflection.

And as time went on it became a habit of the present writer to experiment on his shipmates by noting their reactions to the works of Conrad. The point to remember is that, neglecting certain easily-explained failures, men reacted in direct ratio to their integrity of character. The cunning, the avaricious, and the ignoble are not admirers of Conrad. There is something in the style and the spirit which reaches surely and inexorably down into a man's moral resources and sounds them for him. To those who in the jargon of the red-blooded fraternity want a story, it is to be feared our author does not appeal. This was exemplified by "Typhoon" which was tried upon a naval reserve officer, a brisk efficient resourceful young man with an acute "examination brain". His criticism was brief and emphatic. "You could write the whole story on a couple of sheets of foolscap," he grumbled. "There's nothing to it; too far-fetched as well." He shut the book with a sudden closing of fingers and thumb, and passed it back, promptly forgetting the whole affair. He is neither cunning, avaricious, nor ignoble, but he is afflicted with the modern conception of efficiency. For him romance lies in the past of highwaymen, knights in shining armor, and Machiavellian cardinals of inconceivable obliquity.

To a writer who has indulged his humor by watching seafaring folk in their reactions as mentioned above, these collected prefaces which Conrad has written for the Sun Dial edition of his works, under the title of "Notes on My Books"[1], have a very special interest. They tell with a direct and disarming candor the authentic origin of the tales. The troublesome enthusiast who is forever seeking the fiction which is "founded on fact" will get small comfort here, for here are the facts. It is the penalty of success in the fictional art to illumine the obscure experiences of worthy members of the public and convince them that such and such an affair "actually happened". These folk are very timid at trying their wings. They dread leaving the solid earth behind. It is a positive comfort to them to feel that the things which have touched their



hearts are only the bright shadows of the hard actualities under their feet. The chief engineer to whom I presented "Lord Jim" (not the beloved and bearded personality described above),

[1]Published by Doubleday, Page and Co. under authorization of Mr. Conrad for distribution by Gabriel Wells.

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was an interesting variant of this. A hard-bitten portly individual, an excellent officer, and well read withal, he deprecated in its entirety the Conradian philosophy and literary method. Yes, he knew the story out east, as did everybody else. A ship called the "Jeddah", it was, which ran over a sunken derelict and broke her back. The officers left her. Who wouldn't? A million chances to one against her lasting ten minutes. Conrad had idealized the mate Jim, that was all.

That was the word he used: "idealized". He was a blunt Englishman, with his emotions planted almost inaccessibly deep down among his racial prejudices. He objected really to anybody's discussing the fundamental motives of man. It was not the thing to do. Possibly the slight imponderable irony which almost always creeps into Conrad's descriptions of seagoing engineers, was responsible for my friend's irritation. Leaving out the worthy Solomon Rout in "Typhoon", Conrad seems to have been something less than fortunate in his engineer types....

At the other end of the scale the present writer preserves a most lively memory of his introduction to "Youth" by the third mate of a beef ship running into London river. An alert and cheerful college boy who had been through the hard grueling of an apprenticeship in sail, he was at that stage of the twenties when one is equally interesting to the women of thirty, the men of forty, and the mothers of fifty. And it was he who, as we were passing the watch below in friendly comparison of books read, suddenly lighted up all over his fresh ruddy features and said in a glow of delicious enthusiasm, "I say, haven't you read 'Youth'? My word, but you must read 'Youth'! It's ripping! The finest tale I ever read in my life!"

And he stuck to it in spite of anything the others might say. He had been caught by the extraordinary glamour of the thing, the superb simplicity of the narrative, the cumulative power of the finale. He would never be the same being again after reading that tale. Here we have an achievement for which there is no adequate name save genius.

Other books there are of Conrad's which enshrine no memories of a shipmate's admiration or dislike. There is "Nostromo" for instance, that little-read masterpiece of creative literature. Ordered from London during the war, and read while voyaging between Port Said and Saloniki, this "tale of a seaboard" made the monotonous business of naval transport seem a dim and ridiculous fragment of unreality. The huge size of the canvas, the sweep and surge of the narrative, the sudden revealing phrases, the balanced cadence of the sentences, the single harp notes calling to some obscure emotion of the soul—all these made their appeal and created an imperishable memory.

And there is a point it is pertinent to make here, in view of this new volume of "Notes on Life and Letters"[2]: that it is doing Conrad a disservice to characterize him as "a sea writer". One does not call Turner a sea painter. The highest genius does not shackle itself with such very trivial restrictions. Some of the finest of Conrad's tales have nothing whatever to do with the sea, notably "Heart of Darkness", "Under Western Eyes", and "An Outcast of the Islands". If it be not misunderstood, the present writer would like to say that going to sea will have had very little influence

[2]Doubleday, Page and Co.

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upon the final verdict of posterity upon Conrad's work. His philosophy is his own and fundamentally antagonistic to the ideas of most seafarers. His technical method is provoking to seamen, who have a very different fashion of telling a tale—as different in fact as the average ship master is from Charlie Marlow. There is, as Conrad himself remarks, nothing speculative in a sailor's mentality. The meaning of his story is on the outside. Conrad is entirely speculative. He tells the story almost in absence of mind. He will bring you right up to a moment of almost unendurable dramatic intensity and then devote half a dozen pages to depicting the psychological phenomena attendant upon it. We who are gathered here consider the labor justified by the unique results. The red-blooded folk whose conception of drama is as rudimentary as the struggle to enter a crowded subway train, are naively infuriated when deprived of their precious story. There are classes of novel readers who will not have Conrad at any price. They lack patience and are not compensated by any perfection of prose diction which may inadvertently come under their notice. For them the donkeyman, the carpenter, and storekeeper, mentioned earlier in this essay, were simply taciturn nonentities. For us they are a bizarre trinity of lonely souls floating in mysterious proximity through a universe of ironic destinies. For us there are the indistinct shadows of men like Axel Heyst, Captain MacWhirr, and Falk.

The present writer feels a special debt of gratitude for these "Notes on Life and Letters" since they include a number of fugitive pieces, occasional contributions to reviews, which he missed at the time, owing to being in some distant harbor. There is the very indignant digression, for example, upon the loss of the "Titanic". And it is worthy of note that when he deigns to speak of his contemporaries, Conrad is exasperatingly unaware of the existence of the gods in the best-selling universe. He has much to say, on the contrary, of Henry James, of Dostoyevsky, and of Anatole France. These articles are exactly what one would expect from the author: urbane and dignified criticism of one artist by another. Conrad has been honored similarly by H. G. Wells, whose review of "Almayer's Folly" and "An Outcast of the Islands" is a masterpiece of critical insight.

Yet one returns again to the Prefaces. One has here the feeling of being shown round the studio by the master. This, he seems to say, is exactly how it was done. He deprecates gently, and one hopes sincerely, the formidable accretion of legendary romanticism which has collected about his career. We are to believe that these people in his books never actually existed—they are the magnificent fabrications of the author's brain. A hint here, a whispered conversation there, a newspaper yarn over yonder —and lo! fifteen years later Willems or Falk or Razumov or Nostromo emerges from obscurity and assumes an enigmatic attitude of having existed since the dawn of time. This will be very disappointing to those prosaic enthusiasts who like to hear that all great characters in fiction have their originals in history. And the present writer must confess he had weakly imagined that "The Secret Agent" was the happy result of a long-past familiarity with the strange folk who hang around legations and live in disreputable lodgings off Greek Street or the Vauxhall Bridge Road.

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And yet of what avail are these prying speculations? There seems still to survive in us much of that ghoulish predilection of the Middle Ages for relics. We will go to a museum to look with veneration upon the authentic trinkets of the illustrious dead. So in these "Notes on My Books" one must resist the temptation to linger over the personal revelations with vulgar curiosity. They are for our information and comfort, but they hold no anodyne for pain or elixir of youth whereby we may regain our lost illusions. They must in no case divert our attention from one preface in particular—a preface set apart by virtue of its history and intention. It would be much more just to call it the confession of faith of a supreme master of prose. The present writer is unable to speak of it without emotion. It enshrines in resonant and perfect phrases the secret convictions of his heart. It is the crowning gift of a great artist; and when one pauses to condense in a few words an adequate comprehension of that artist's work, one turns instinctively to this long-suppressed preface to "The Nigger of the Narcissus". As one reads, one recalls. The literary art, he says,

...must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music, which is the art of arts. And it is only through complete unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it is only through an unremitting, never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to colour and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage.

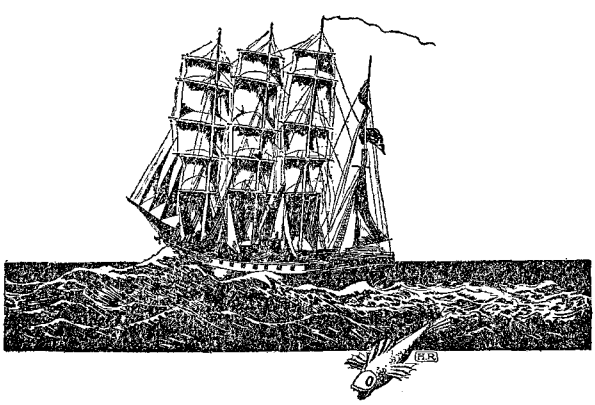
And again, of the writer:

He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.

So he sums it up. Beyond this, in placing the bounds of the author's art, it is impossible to go. One is permitted only to add, for the purpose of supplying a fitting conclusion, the final paragraph.

The humble and industrious among us may smile incredulously yet toil on with a better heart when they read that our aim should be

...to arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim, difficult and evanescent and reserved only for a very few to achieve. But sometimes, by the deserving and the fortunate even that task is accomplished. And when it is accomplished—behold!—all the truth of life is there: a moment of vision, a sigh, a smile—and the return to an eternal rest.



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RECALLED

By Edwin Arlington Robinson

LONG after there were none of them alive
About the place—where there is now no place
But a walled hole where fruitless vines embrace
Their parent skeletons that yet survive
In evil thorns—none of us could arrive
At a more cogent answer to their ways
Than one old Isaac in his latter days
Had humor or compassion to contrive.

I mentioned them, and Isaac shook his head:
"The Power that you call yours, and I call mine,
Extinguished in the last of them a line
That Satan would have disinherited.
When we are done with all but the Divine,
We die." And there was no more to be said.

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BROTHERS

By Sherwood Anderson

I AM at my house in the country and it is late October. It rains. Back of my house is a forest and in front there is a road and beyond that open fields. The country is one of low hills, flattening suddenly into plains. Some twenty miles away, across the flat country, lies the huge city, Chicago.

On this rainy day the leaves of the trees that line the road before my window are falling like rain, the yellow, red, and golden leaves fall straight down heavily. The rain beats them brutally down. They are denied a last golden flash across the sky. In October leaves should be carried away, out over the plains, in a wind. They should go dancing away.

Yesterday morning I arose at daybreak and went for a walk. There was a heavy fog and I lost myself in it. I went down into the plains and returned to the hills and everywhere the fog was as a wall before me. Out of it trees sprang suddenly, grotesquely, as in a city street late at night people come suddenly out of the darkness into the circle of light under a street lamp. Above there was the light of day forcing itself slowly into the fog. The fog moved slowly. The tops of trees moved slowly. Under the trees the fog was dense, purple. It was like smoke lying in the streets of a factory town.

An old man came up to me in the fog. I know him well. The people here call him insane. "He is a little cracked," they say. He lives alone in a little house buried deep in the forest and has a small dog he carries always in his arms. On many mornings I have met him walking on the road and he has told me of men and women who were his brothers and sisters, his cousins, aunts, uncles, brothers-in-law. The notion has possession of him. He cannot draw close to people near at hand so he gets hold of a name out of a newspaper and his mind plays with it. One morning he told me he was a cousin to the man named Cox who at the time when I write is a candidate for the presidency. On another morning he told me that Caruso the singer had married a woman who was his sister-in-law. "She is my wife's sister," he said, holding the little dog closely. His grey watery eyes looked appealingly up to me. He wanted me to believe. "My wife was a sweet slim girl," he declared. "We lived together in a big house and in the morning walked about arm in arm. Now her sister has married Caruso the singer. He is of my family now." As someone had told me the old man had never been married I went away wondering.

One morning in early September I came upon him sitting under a tree beside a path near his house. The dog barked at me and then ran and crept into his arms. At that time the Chicago newspapers were filled with the story of a millionaire who had got into trouble with his wife because of an intimacy with an actress. The old man told me the actress was his sister. He is sixty years old and the actress whose story appeared in the newspa-

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pers is twenty, but he spoke of their childhood together. "You would not realize it to see us now but we were poor then," he said. "It's true. We lived in a little house on the side of a hill. Once when there was a storm the wind nearly swept our house away. How the wind blew. Our father was a carpenter and he built strong houses for other people but our own house he did not build very strongly." He shook his head sorrowfully. "My sister the actress has got into trouble. Our house is not built very strongly," he said as I went away along the path.

* * * *

For a month, two months, the Chicago newspapers, that are delivered every morning in our village, have been filled with the story of a murder. A man there has murdered his wife and there seems no reason for the deed. The tale runs something like this—

The man, who is now on trial in the courts and will no doubt he hanged, worked in a bicycle factory where he was a foreman, and lived with his wife and his wife's mother in an apartment in Thirty-second Street. He loved a girl who worked in the office of the factory where he was employed. She came from a town in Iowa and when she first came to the city lived with her aunt who has since died. To the foreman, a heavy stolid-looking man with grey eyes, she seemed the most beautiful woman in the world. Her desk was by a window at an angle of the factory, a sort of wing of the building, and the foreman, down in the shop, had a desk by another window. He sat at his desk making out sheets containing the record of the work done by each man in his department. When he looked up he could see the girl sitting at work at her desk. The notion got into his head that she was peculiarly lovely. He did not think of trying to draw close to her or of winning her love. He looked at her as one might look at a star or across a country of low hills in October when the leaves of the trees are all red and yellow gold. "She is a pure, virginal thing," he thought vaguely. "What can she be thinking about as she sits there by the window at work?"

In fancy the foreman took the girl from Iowa home with him to his apartment in Thirty-second Street and into the presence of his wife and his mother-in-law. All day in the shop and during the evening at home he carried her figure about with him in his mind. As he stood by a window in his apartment and looked out toward the Illinois Central railroad tracks and beyond the tracks to the lake, the girl was there beside him. Down below women walked in the street and in every woman he saw there was something of the Iowa girl. One woman walked as she did, another made a gesture with her hand that reminded of her. All the women he saw except only his wife and his mother-in-law were like the girl he had taken inside himself.

The two women in his own house puzzled and confused him. They became suddenly unlovely and commonplace. His wife in particular was like some strange unlovely growth that had attached itself to his body.

In the evening after the day at the factory he went home to his own place and had dinner. He had always been a silent man and when he did not talk no one minded. After dinner he, with his wife, went to a picture show. When they came home his wife's mother sat under an electric light reading. There were two children and

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his wife expected another. They came into the apartment and sat down. The climb up two flights of stairs had wearied his wife. She sat in a chair beside her mother groaning with weariness.

The mother-in-law was the soul of goodness. She took the place of a servant in the home and got no pay. When her daughter wanted to go to a picture show she waved her hand and smiled. "Go on," she said. "I don't want to go. I'd rather sit here." She got a book and sat reading. The little boy of nine awoke and cried. He wanted to sit on the po-po. The mother-in-law attended to that.

After the man and his wife came home the three people sat in silence for an hour or two before bedtime. The man pretended to read a newspaper. He looked at his hands. Although he had washed them carefully grease from the bicycle frames left dark stains under the nails. He thought of the Iowa girl and of her white quick hands playing over the keys of a typewriter. He felt dirty and uncomfortable.

The girl at the factory knew the foreman had fallen in love with her and the thought excited her a little. Since her aunt's death she had gone to live in a rooming house and had nothing to do in the evening. Although the foreman meant nothing to her she could in a way use him. To her he became a symbol. Sometimes he came into the office and stood for a moment by the door. His large hands were covered with black grease. She looked at him without seeing. In his place in her imagination stood a tall slender young man. Of the foreman she saw only the grey eyes that began to burn with a strange fire. The eyes expressed eagerness, a humble and devout eagerness. In the presence of a man with such eyes she felt she need not be afraid.

She wanted a lover who would come to her with such a look in his eyes. Occasionally, perhaps once in two weeks, she stayed a little late at the office, pretending to have work that must be finished. Through the window she could see the foreman, waiting. When everyone had gone she closed her desk and went into the street. At the same moment the foreman came out at the factory door.

They walked together along the street, a half-dozen blocks, to where she got aboard her car. The factory was in a place called South Chicago and as they went along evening was coming on. The streets were lined with small unpainted frame houses and dirty-faced children ran screaming in the dusty roadway. They crossed over a bridge. Two abandoned coal barges lay rotting in the stream.

He went along by her side walking heavily, striving to conceal his hands. He had scrubbed them carefully before leaving the factory but they seemed to him like heavy dirty pieces of waste matter hanging at his side. Their walking together happened but a few times and during one summer. "It's hot," he said. He never spoke to her of anything but the weather. "It's hot," he said; "I think it may rain."

She dreamed of the lover who would some time come, a tall fair young man, a rich man owning houses and lands. The workingman who walked beside her had nothing to do with her conception of love. She walked with him, stayed at the office until the others had gone to walk unobserved with him, because of his eyes, because of the eager thing in his eyes that was at the same time humble, that bowed down to her. In his presence there was no danger, could be no danger.

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He would never attempt to approach too closely, to touch her with his hands. She was safe with him.

In his apartment in the evening the man sat under the electric light with his wife and his mother-in-law. In the next room his two children were asleep. In a short time his wife would have another child. He had been with her to a picture show and presently they would get into bed together.

He would lie awake thinking, would hear the creaking of the springs of a bed from where, in another room, his mother-in-law was crawling under the sheets. Life was too intimate. He would lie awake eager, expectant—expecting what?

Nothing. Presently one of the children would cry. It wanted to get out of bed and sit on the po-po. Nothing strange or unusual or lovely would or could happen. Life was too close, intimate. Nothing that could happen in the apartment could in any way stir him. The things his wife might say, her occasional half-hearted outbursts of passion, the goodness of his stout mother-in-law who did the work of a servant without pay—

He sat in the apartment under the electric light pretending to read a newspaper—thinking. He looked at his hands. They were large, shapeless, a workingman's hands.

The figure of the girl from Iowa walked about the room. With her he went out of the apartment and walked in silence through miles of streets. It was not necessary to say words. He walked with her by a sea, along the crest of a mountain. The night was clear and silent and the stars shone. She also was a star. It was not necessary to say words.

Her eyes were like stars and her lips were like soft hills rising out of dim, star-lit plains. "She is unattainable, she is far off like the stars," he thought. "She is unattainable like the stars but unlike the stars she breathes, she lives, like myself she has being."

One evening, some six weeks ago, the man who worked as foreman in the bicycle factory killed his wife and he is now in the courts being tried for murder. Every day the newspapers are filled with the story. On the evening of the murder he had taken his wife as usual to a picture show and they started home at nine. In Thirty-second Street, at a corner near their apartment building, the figure of a man darted suddenly out of an alleyway and then darted back again. That incident may have put the idea of killing his wife into the man's head.

They got to the entrance to the apartment building and stepped into a dark hallway. Then quite suddenly and apparently without thought the man took a knife out of his pocket. "Suppose that man who darted into the alleyway had intended to kill us," he thought. Opening the knife he whirled about and struck at his wife. He struck twice, a dozen times—madly. There was a scream and his wife's body fell.

The janitor had neglected to light the gas in the lower hallway. Afterward, the foreman decided that was the reason he did it, that and the fact that the dark slinking figure of a man darted out of an alleyway and then darted back again. "Surely," he told himself, "I could never have done it had the gas been lighted."

He stood in the hallway thinking. His wife was dead and with her had died her unborn child. There was a sound of doors opening in the apartments above. For several minutes nothing happened. His wife and her unborn child were dead—that was all.

He ran upstairs thinking quickly.

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In the darkness on the lower stairway he had put the knife back into his pocket and, as it turned out later, there was no blood on his hands or on his clothes. The knife he later washed carefully in the bathroom, when the excitement had died down a little. He told everyone the same story. "There has been a holdup," he explained. "A man came slinking out of an alleyway and followed me and my wife home. He followed us into the hallway of the building and there was no light." The janitor had neglected to light the gas. Well there had been a struggle and in the darkness his wife had been killed. He could not tell how it had happened. "There was no light. The janitor had neglected to light the gas," he kept saying.

For a day or two they did not question him specially and he had time to get rid of the knife. He took a long walk and threw it away into the river in South Chicago where the two abandoned coal barges lay rotting under the bridge, the bridge he had crossed when on the summer evenings he walked to the street car with the girl who was virginal and pure, who was far off and unattainable, like a star and yet not like a star.

And then he was arrested and right away he confessed—told everything. He said he did not know why he had killed his wife and was careful to say nothing of the girl at the office. The newspapers tried to discover the motive for the crime. They are still trying. Someone had seen him on the few evenings when he walked with the girl and she was dragged into the affair and had her picture printed in the paper. That has been annoying for her, as of course she has been able to prove she had nothing to do with the man.

* * * *

Yesterday morning a heavy fog lay over our village here at the edge of the city and I went for a long walk in the early morning. As I returned out of the lowlands into our hill country I met the old man whose family has so many and such strange ramifications. For a time he walked beside me holding the little dog in his arms. It was cold and the dog whined and shivered. In the fog the old man's face was indistinct. It moved slowly back and forth with the fog banks of the upper air and with the tops of trees. He spoke of the man who has killed his wife and whose name is being shouted in the pages of the city newspapers that come to our village each morning. As he walked beside me he launched into a long tale concerning a life he and his brother, who had now become a murderer, had once lived together. "He is my brother," he said over and over, shaking his head. He seemed afraid I would not believe. There was a fact that must be established. "We were boys together, that man and I," he began again. "You see we played together in a barn back of our father's house. Our father went away to sea in a ship. That is the way our names became confused. You understand that. We have different names but we are brothers. We had the same father. We played together in a barn back of our father's house. All day we lay together in the hay in the barn and it was warm there."

In the fog the slender body of the old man became like a little gnarled tree. Then it became a thing suspended in air. It swung back and forth like a body hanging on the gallows. The face beseeched me to believe the story the lips were trying to tell. In my mind everything concerning the relationship of men and women became confused, a muddle. The spirit

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of the man who had killed his wife came into the body of the little old man there by the roadside. It was striving to tell me the story it would never be able to tell in the courtroom in the city, in the presence of the judge. The whole story of mankind's loneliness, of the effort to reach out to unattainable beauty tried to get itself expressed from the lips of a mumbling old man, crazed with loneliness, who stood by the side of a country road on a foggy morning holding a little dog in his arms.

The arms of the old man held the dog so closely that it began to whine with pain. A sort of convulsion shook his body. The soul seemed striving to wrench itself out of the body, to fly away through the fog down across the plain to the city, to the singer, the politician, the millionaire, the murderer, to its brothers, cousins, sisters, down in the city. The intensity of the old man's desire was terrible and in sympathy my body began to tremble. His arms tightened about the body of the little dog so that it screamed with pain. I stepped forward and tore the arms away and the dog fell to the ground and lay whining. No doubt it had been injured. Perhaps ribs had been crushed. The old man stared at the dog lying at his feet as in the hallway of the apartment building the worker from the bicycle factory had stared at his dead wife. "We are brothers," he said again. "We have different names but we are brothers. Our father you understand went off to sea."

* * * *

I am sitting in my house in the country and it rains. Before my eyes the hills fall suddenly away and there are the flat plains and beyond the plains the city. An hour ago the old man of the house in the forest went past my door and the little dog was not with him. It may be that as we talked in the fog he crushed the life out of his companion. It may be that the dog like the workman's wife and her unborn child is now dead. The leaves of the trees that line the road before my window are falling like rain —the yellow, red, and golden leaves fall straight down, heavily. The rain beats them brutally down. They are denied a last golden flash across the sky. In October leaves should be carried away, out over the plains, in a wind. They should go dancing away.

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FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING

(A Bouquet of Younger Writers)

By Sidney Howard

THE younger state in literature lies midway between the highchair and the great day on which the bacon finally comes home in earnest. The state in which the mirage of achievement does the trick as well as the real thing. The state of the cult of youth and, nowadays, decidedly in the fashion. Indeed, if you were to ask *us* for publics, we should turn our back upon success and sensation and show you the intensive devotion of these serious thinkers who stand devoting about the younger writer every day in the week and twice on Sundays. Not young, merely, nor youngest. Younger—preferably about the twenty-second of the allotted three score and ten. Step forward and join the cult of youth.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Now the flowers of our title depend entirely upon your own favorite school of literary metaphor. What with cabbages, however, and Gilbert and Sullivan, and immaturity, and the case with which these very flowers have so little to do, a modern grove of Academe for the present, if you please.

Modern, in the guise of a suburban back yard not quite long enough after the last thaw but one. Already the flowers are sprouting, hardily, in some places, and with vigor; in others, with cause for worry lest there should come another frost. The watchful gardeners patrol the paths, cynical souls and sentimental comforters. MM. the Editors, MM. the Publishers, MM. the Critics; MM. the proud and prophetic Professors, largely paternal; the heroic Mesdames Mæcenas, tracking the lion cub; Messieurs et Dames the Closeteers and Coterines. Eager, hopeful, despairing, after the nature of each, in this garden that is so promising, so dubious, and so inane.

Gardeners and visitors, both, they are the curse of the literary spring. They come too early to tell roses from radishes. They scorch some sprouts with too rich fertilizer. Some they weed out before the blooming time. The garden might thrive wildly and bitterly to a fine summer, but the odds are against it. It must be cheered and petted and fostered and patronized. The flowers that bloom in the spring have become the fashion.

It is depressing to reflect that there must once have been a time which knew none of this tense interest in budding talent. It is depressing, now, to

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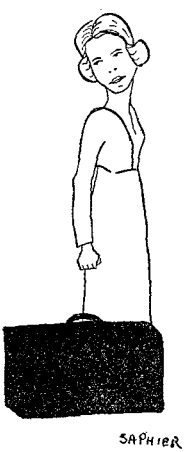
contemplate all the blighting and devastating acts of which, in honor of budding talent, these publicans and sinners are capable. Alas for youth! It can no longer try itself apart. It must be gathered in by Coterines to be smothered in its own mediocrity. It must be developed by Closeteers into plagiarism of its elders. Editors pursue it with their doctrines of what the public wants. Publishers lure it too soon into irrevocable print. Critics feed their hungry columns upon it. Hidden in western fields, the literati of Indiana and Kansas are certain to absorb and denature it to their own credit. Buried in the fastnesses of Chicago, it is still fair prey to the keen scent of Miss Monroe and Mr. Mencken. Excavated from the kitchen middens of universities, it cannot escape the impeccable introduction which the professor *will* write to its prematurely published works.

Groups that are gathered for mutual admiration. Movements which move in circles. Exploiting universities. Greenwich Village in New York and bohemian life in Kansas City and Parnassus in Indiana. Radical bookshops, "The Dial", "Vanity Fair", Parlor Bolshevism, Poetry Magazines, and Little Theatres. God help the flowers that bloom in the spring and grant them a little time of obscurity and shyness. Never has youthful talent hoed so hard a row, for never has it been so fostered.

It all began with the phenomenal advertising genius of Amy Lowell. "Publicity first," she cried. "Poetry will follow." She must be recognized as the initiator of quantity production in American poetry. She gave fire to youth to play with. She stimulated an avalanche of slim tomes filled with emptiness. The impetus of her campaign made it possible for poets to deluge us with their rhythmical impressions of nothing in particular. Thanks to her, Witter Bynner can dash off a series of night letters and telegrams, interspersed with an occasional bill of lading, and sell it as a volume of poems.

Benét, O'Neil, McLane, and Hillyer; Putnam and Boyle and Chubb and Coates; Bellinger, Leserman, and Farrar; the sophomores of "The Dial"; Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marya Zaturensky and Company. The roll is too long. Poems are with us, the worst and most in history.

Chief of the recent sins against the young author is the determination of Yale College that the poetry of its undergraduates shall join Christian Science and ice water in the group of national institutions. For Yale has followed the Newpoetic urge and has been swept along in the tidal wave of Miss Lowell's enthusiasm. Yale has produced more poets than Queen Elizabeth. We do not mean to say that there is anything new about Yale po-



EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

etry except the urge. To its credit be it said that it shows an honorable respect for time-honored form. It is wholly in the tradition of youthful poetry, has the usual undistinguishing characteristics. Its sonnets are well

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turned and its lyrics lyrical enough. It is suitably and normally melancholy. It shows an expert observation of the obvious and a chaste enthusiasm for incontinence. And it is singularly uninspired. Pretty good poetry; pretty good eggs*—with two notable exceptions. Only MM. Benét and Putnam make it possible to forgive the triolets on the war and children's songs the Yale poets have written.

The Yale poets are to be found in a series of pale blue and very thin volumes, in a serial anthology, "Parabalou", and in sundry publications of the home press. The real sin of Eli is the series in blue. "Parabalou" is redeemed by some poems of Mr. Putnam. The Yale Press is too serious and valuable an institution for our gibes. Mr. Benét's early poems saw the light by means of it and that alone were reason enough for gratitude. Since the task in hand is to decry the cult of youth, it is fitting that those youths who have risen despite the efforts of the cult should be singled out from their fellows. The illusion and intensity of poetry is in the verse of Mr. Benét and, scarcely less, in Mr. Putnam's poems. Mr. Putnam is not known, has not published any volumes—may his first be a thick one! His poems are serious; serious health is strong in them, and strong simplicity. A ballad, some less formal lyrics, and a sonnet series are all we know. But they are wise and fine things, well thought and beautiful.

Brave cynic fellow, now unclench your hand,
And put your sword away, and think the more
How old to-morrow leans upon the land.

He stands among the others with the individuality of decision.

Mr. Benét has published several volumes. His last, "Heavens and Earth", is the most vivid and enthralling book of poems we have had of late from any American poet. He is a person of rare and sensitive appreciation and of abounding health. His appreciation is exciting by virtue of its richness and its variety. And in all the many and varied moods of beauty which he expresses there is a high and fantastic energy, an energy which bounds through the looser forms of his short lyric narratives, which glows warmly in his feeling for the sonnet. The volume in question is in part occupied with a pair of long poems, "Two Visions of Helen", a series of lyrics strung upon a chain of narrative and imagery, as colorful as D'Annunzio. For the remainder, a series of vignettes of New York, pleasantly named "The Tall Town", and varied briefer poems, whimsical, serious, cleanly direct.

He is the author, too, of a novel, presently to appear, a novel which we anticipate with discreet pleasure. He is an immigrant, along with so many of his day, practising *wanderlust* in France, somewhere, a very proper place. A quick personality; no nonsense about him, as one pictures him, taking his art like grim death and himself quite casually, discovering, once, that Masefield is a god, seeing a rubber tire in a window and making a lyric of the sight, nervously adventurous, incapable of imitation, driven forward by the really creative and beautiful power of his own invention. Driven, it would seem, to almost any goal and not a whit disturbed by admiration.

Whatever slurs we cast upon Yale and its minor poets, poetic Harvard has been far less fortunate. Perhaps there is a kind of health at Yale which Harvard lacks. We are more inclined to lay the blame to luck. Yale, despite all, has produced Benét and Putnam. Harvard has produced no one of their

*From the standard epigrams of Charles Townsend Copeland.

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calibre. But Harvard cannot be ignored. Of poets, since the tragic glory which fell upon the poems of Alan Seeger, two only have emerged and, since they were not pushed back by the authorities, they must be dealt with. One, Mr. Cummings, is a bright luminary of "The Dial" and writes an entrancing kind of thing without capitals and punctuation. The effect upon the printed page is most entertaining. Unfortunately the entertainment is diminished once the poem is read. But only for a moment. It is quite impossible to remember the poem and the delight of the first impression never fades. You will find his poems almost any month among the *modern* forms. They are well worth looking at. So, for that matter, is "The Dial" which was conceived and brought forth from Harvard but has had, to date, no known effect upon the endowment fund.

And, God bless our soul, there is Robert Hillyer just out of college and gone to Copenhagen on a scholarship. Mr. Hillyer has been quite as heavily published as Mr. Benét though it is a little hard to understand why. We confess that we are intrigued by his verse. Who would not be? For example, there is an early poem about Montmartre, that hillock in Paris of which we have always heard such glowing accounts. The poem, a bright impression of prostitution, closes as follows:

> I waited till the stars went down
> And I wrote these lines on a cloud to greet
> The dawn on the crystal stairs.

"Very good, Eddie," we add; but, of course, we know a lot about Montmartre.

Then there is "Alchemy". This poem is modeled upon the César Franck symphony in D minor. There is a thema or leitmotif, too. "Poet, a thousand years hence..." tee-dum-tee ...you remember how it goes. Look the book over. Its illustrations are decidedly attractive. But you will agree with us that a thousand years hence need not worry Mr. Hillyer. He is, perhaps, the most unfortunate victim of the cult of youth. One might almost say of him, as Lamb said of Dekker, that he "has poetry enough for any man". His lust for beautiful sound is evidently insatiable. And that may do very well in the salons of Cambridge and the Back Bay. But it is no more than an imitation of technique.

ARCHIE AUSTIN COATES

Harvard's answer to this poppycock is twofold: and here, for the moment, we part company with poets. Professor Baker's "47 Workshop" has been too well advertised these many years to concern us long. While Edward Sheldon was still a student it produced his "Salvation Nell". The beautiful plays of Eugene O'Neill are, indirectly, a later product. It is the most notable and legitimate school of writing in any university. With one possible exception, and that one "The Harvard Lampoon". This, by far the best (as it is the oldest) of American humorous publications, has sent more than one young man to a career. Ed-

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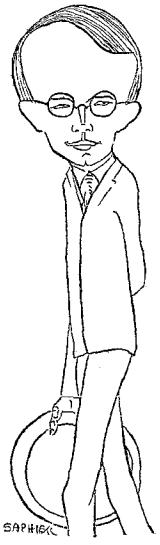

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET

ward S. Martin, the veteran editor of "Life", is the dean of "Lampoon" humorists. Robert C. Benchley of "Vanity Fair" formerly and of "Life" today, holds the torch high for the young men, and Robert Sherwood, one of the latest editors of the college paper, does bravely by Mr. Benchley's side. Of all younger authors, we like the humorists best and are most impressed by them. Their works are legion and their standards admirable. And, finally, they are fortunate in that they are unexploited. Critics ignore them, they are as nothing to the Coterine.

We should like to review many of them, and it is with deep reluctance that we confine ourselves to one. That one, Henry William Hanemann, is a master. He is a recent graduate of Columbia, a member of the editorial staff of "Life", and believes that every office should keep an office dog if only to rub stamps on his nose. You will find his works in any copy of "Life", and the redemption of "America's leading humorous weekly" from the depths of inanity into which, of recent years, it had fallen, is largely due to them. His humor—parody, satire, and slapstick—is also art. It has life and cadence and a superb effervescence. At its best, when he finds his own subject to his own liking, it has the quality of a Chaplin film. It is almost outrageously American; defiant, irreverent, and irrepressible burlesque. He has published no book, more's the pity, and we await one.

The meteoric career of Edward Streeter seems not to have carried on since the days of "Dere Mabel" and her immediate successors. An occasional story in "Collier's" or some other paper and some syndicated copy, have been below his first standard. It may be that his very success has, for the moment, eclipsed him.

From California, privately issued, since republished in New York City, comes a very beautifully printed little volume of charming lyrics by Hildegarde Flanner. Of all the publications of younger poets, this is the slimmest. It is called "Young Girl" after the first poem, and its odd dozen pages have more freshness and more delight in them that we have often found of late. They are a visual joy, too, these pages that are so exquisitely adorned by the real art of a real artist, Porter Garnett.

Detached, at least to our knowledge, from any university or other group, are two books upon which we cast a not unfriendly eye. "Spindrift" is a series of lyrics by James L. McLane, Jr. The youth of the author is attested by authority, wherefore he belongs on our list. His poems have charm, no great originality, enough poetic quality to carry the reader through from cover to cover. His book is somewhat thicker than the average. We are grateful for that. The second of this detached pair

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is "Told in a Chinese Garden" by Constance Wilcox. It is a volume of pleasant little plays to be performed out of doors by amateurs. It will serve.

And so to Chicago where Harriet Monroe will publish any young poet free of charge. Her magazine, "Poetry", is almost the official publication of the great race of Coterines. It may, coolly, be said to have given the world as much bad verse as all the other magazines lumped into one. In spite of which it rises, now and again, upon its ashes, to bring forth lyrics and slightly longer poems of real beauty and energy. Mr. Leserman impressed us last April with a clever group. Many of the other youthfuls have profited by Miss Monroe's sublimated typewriter, but there is no hope to be got from a magazine dedicated to fostering.

And so to the nation's metropolis where all young authors seem to congregate in that curious segregated district south of Fourteenth Street, once named, now proclaimed as Greenwich Village. Not so long since one Waldo Frank wrote a book about the place and called it "Our America". It was a ridiculous book, a sort of memorial of a likely but short-lived group of old rose-reds which had gathered about the magazine, "The Seven Arts". And it was, though it claimed not to be, about "The Village". *There* magazines come and go and the cult of youth is a cult indeed. So much a cult that one despairs for its worshipers and weeps for its victims. *There* are modern forms with the courage of their convictions, let us tell you, and selves realized and experience tasted.

Four names emerge, all things considered, an extraordinary number. Edna St. Vincent Millay, a poetess, George O'Neil, a poet, Phyllis Duganne, a novelist, and Archie Coates, a writer difficult to classify. Miss Millay wrote excellent lyrics in a volume named "Renaissance" and has since printed much less excellent lyrics in a good many magazines. Singly, her poems seem the real thing; collectively, they are no more than the expression in neat form of a quaint sense of fantasy and a pretty taste in the macabre. She is given to reciting them, her fellow Bohemians about her on the floor admiring. She has been hailed by "Vanity Fair" as a genius. She has migrated to Paris for inspiration. She is very pretty. She may well write more poems. A book is forthcoming. One prefers not to prophesy.

One admires George O'Neil more and resents him less. His book, "The Cobbler in Willow Street", verges on *imagisme* in spots but contains lovely if unimportant stanzas. They are sincere poems, curiously in the university manner for an inhabitant of the segregated district. That may be explained by his background of St. Louis. Phyllis Duganne has done a number of stories and printed one novel, "Prologue", a cheap story only moderately well written. Mr. Coates's volume, "City Tides", can scarcely survive the silly introduction which Charles Hanson Towne committed in its honor.

ROBERT HILLYER

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GEORGE O'NEIL

Both O'Neil and Benét have written of New York. There is no point of comparison. Mr. Coates is a New Poet, conventional as only the "very daring" can be, and tricky. His melodrama is sometimes effective enough.

So ends Greenwich Village. You will find many more of them in the absurd magazines which are for sale in all radical bookshops. But they are not worth our while. Inexperience may be turned to productive ends but it is not finally creative, and the little circle about which these pocket edition geniuses swirl ends at Fourteenth Street, geographically and artistically.

Then, suddenly, athwart the cult of youth, stands Scott Fitzgerald. A novel of his, "This Side of Paradise", galloped through editions last spring and summer. It was followed by a volume of admirable short stories, "Flappers and Philosophers". Mr. Fitzgerald is unqualifiedly the most promising young writer in English. His books were a nine days' wonder with the critics. Castor and Pollux of "The Smart Set" raved with their customary violence. The volumes were pronounced masterpieces and absurdities. It is time enough, now, for a cooler judgment. To us the novel seems the clearest treatment of American youth in any fiction of recent years. We like the flagrant disregard of formulæ which throws the book from conventional narrative to short story, drama in dialogue, and, even, to extremely interesting passages in verse. And to our mind Amory, the hero, on his uppers (at the end of the book), enabled Mr. Fitzgerald to write some prose which, for its sympathetic beauty, is distinguished among all the novels of these days. Parts of the book are weaker, but there is honest restraint throughout and an almost uniform excellence of taste.

The stories are less remarkable but not less admirably done. He is possessed of a fine sense of the significant beauty of things. His range is not limited, we think. His chances excellent. His novel would have been better had he written later in his life, but it would also have been less true. He is already of the few whose books we anticipate with eagerness.

Three young men in whose work neither Closeteers nor Coterines have played any part: Fitzgerald, Benét, and Hanemann, who have produced healthily and sold without further ado and gathered in their share of rejection slips and carried on. Three names, a goodly number. Perhaps no other country could show so many. Three young men who can only be bored by all this fuss and turmoil of "our young writers". Three who developed early and independently of groups and admiration and fostering. One sees them together for their common qualities though it is likely enough they have never seen one another.

Energy and creation is in the three. What, in no more of all this army? We think not, dear ladies, for all the tannic libations you may pour to youth, for all the lion cubs you may have sacrificed. And we are grateful that three should have been spared the deep infliction of your patronage.

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ZONA GALE

ZONA GALE signs the country-house guest-book; Portage, Wisconsin.

My suspicion is that she picked the name at random off a railroad time table, as decoy to the fragrant fact that actually she merely stepped down off a painted fan.

I've caught glimpses of her too often framed in the window of a sedan chair, or seated, in pointed basque and black velvet bracelets, on the coping of a fountain, to take the Portage stuff very seriously.

There are certain outstanding occasions upon which I have felt my burliest; chapped by life, as it were.

Once when I strode, in the muddiest of cross-country boots, into the pink silk boudoir of a lovely invalid.

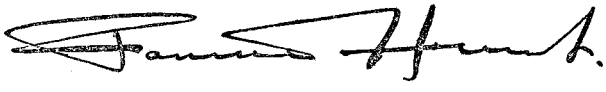
Once, upon my graduation from college when my mother fastened a string of tiny but beautifully matched oriental pearls about my neck which was peeling with sunburn from tennis.

When I met Zona Gale.

The author of "Miss Lulu Bett" is a china shop of quaint porcelains of imagination and against the Dresden of her personality, even the lightest-footed of her friends are apt to take on the proportions of bashing bulls.

The words that describe her kind of preciousness stick obstinately back in the sacheted, attic places of the brain. Musty phrases that went out with the sweeter age of lavender and old lace.

Meanwhile, the legend of Portage, Wisconsin flourishes and only those of us who know better, laugh behind the painted fan.



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MURRAY HILL'S RECOLLECTIONS OF JAMES HUNEKER

NEW YORK, *March*, 1921.

THERE is a rather frisky looking apartment house there now, a pastry shop and tea room occupying the ground floor—behind it, the other side of a venerable brick wall, a tiny, ancient burying ground. But in days of yesteryear here stood a tavern of renown, the Old Grape Vine, which on this site, Sixth Avenue at Eleventh Street, had given cheer since Sixth Avenue was little more than a country road. A sagging, soiled-white, two-story frame structure, with great iron grill lamps before the door. Within, the main room was somewhat reminiscent of London's Olde Cheshire Cheese.

The proprietor was a canny Scot, one MacClellan. ("Old Mac"! Whither has he gone?) I was coming along by there the other day, and I asked a man with whom I chanced to walk if he remembered the Old Grape Vine. "Ah! yes," he said; "they had mutton pies there." They did. And excellent ale, also, served in battered pewter mugs. "They" had here, too (some fifteen years ago), excellent society beneath the dingy light. Roaring, roistering George Luks (as he was then) very much to the fore. At the rickety mahogany table where Frans-Halsian George held forth frequently was to be found the painter William J. Glackens, and his brother "Lew", humorous draughtsman for "Puck". Ernest Lawson sometimes came in. A Mr. Zinzig, a very pleasant soul and an excellent pianist and teacher of the piano, often was of the company. A Mr. Fitzgerald, art critic in those days of the "Sun", occasionally "sat in". And a delightful old cock, Mr. Stephenson, art critic then of the "Evening Post". There was a man of the sea who continuously told stories of Japan. (After eleven he was somewhat given to singing.) There was an illustrator for a twopenny magazine, who (so as to seem to be a large staff) signed a variety of names to his work. From the land of R. L. S., he. One time while in a doze (somewhere else) he was robbed. His comment upon his misfortune became a classic line. It was: "By heaven! As long as whisky is sold to lose ten dollars is enough to drive a Scot mad!" (This was long before anybody had even heard of the illustrious Mr. Volstead.) And many more there were. Ah me! ah me! How the picture has changed!

Well, the point of all this (if it have any point) is that it was in the Old Grape Vine (of tender memory) that I first saw James Gibbons Huneker. I think that, in his promenades as an impressionist, he was there but seldom. Though we know that high among the Seven Arts he rated the fine art of drinking Pilsner. The old places of Martin's and Lüchow's (headquarters on a time for the musical cognoscenti) were ports of call on his rounds, and he moved freely, I believe, among the places of refreshment along the foreign quarter of lower Fourth Avenue. At the Grape Vine, I understand, he was an especial friend of Luks, and probably of Glackens and Lawson. And, though he was a very famous

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man, he seemed to like the motley company.

Ten or twelve years ago I was earning a living more honestly than perhaps I have been making one since. I was a clerk in a book store—the retail department, it happened, of the house which publishes Mr. Huneker's books. And there, from my position "on the floor", I frequently saw him moving in and out. Moving rather slowly, with the dignity of bulk. A distinguished figure, quietly but quite neatly dressed, very erect in carriage, head held well back, supporting his portliness with that physical pride of portly men, a physiognomy of Rodinesque modeling —his cane a trim touch to the ensemble. He was, I distinctly remember, held decidedly in regard by the retail staff because he was (what, by a long shot, a good many "authors" were not) exceedingly affable in manner to us clerks.

The moment I have particularly in mind was when Samuel Butler's volume "The Way of All Flesh" first appeared in an American edition. We all know all about Butler now. But, looking back, it certainly is astonishing how innocent most all of us then were of any knowledge of the great author of "Erewhon". Even so searching a student of literature as W. C. Brownell was practically unacquainted with Butler. He was taking home a copy of "The Way of All Flesh" to read. Mr. Huneker was standing by. In some comment on the book, he remarked that Butler had been a painter. "A painter!" exclaimed Mr. Brownell, in a manner as though wondering how it came about he knew so little of the man. "But this", said Mr. Huneker, referring to the novel, "is not his best stuff. That is in his note books." Brownell: "And where are they?" Huneker: "In the British Museum." Mr. Brownell made a fluttering gesture (as though to express that he "gave up") toward Mr. Huneker. "He knows everything!" he ejaculated.

We should, of course, be surprised now that anybody *did not* know that Butler had been a painter. When, just a short time ago, W. Somerset Maugham adapted for the purposes of his sensational novel "The Moon and Sixpence" the character and career of Paul Gauguin, it was in the pages of Huneker that many first looked for, and found, intelligence concerning the master of the Pont Aven school of painting. Well, Gauguin is now an old story. And Ibsen, Tolstoy, Wagner, Nietzsche, Meredith, Henry James, William James, Bergson, Anatole France, Lemaitre, Faguet, Shaw, Wilde, George Moore, Yeats, Synge, Schnitzler, Rodin, Matisse, Picasso, Van Gogh, George Luks—they all are old stories, too...now. But it was our Steeplejack, James Huneker, who was our pioneer watcher of the skies. And what in the large sweep of his vision of the whole field of the world's beauty he saw, he reported with infinite gusto. "Gusto", as H. L. Mencken in the Huneker article of his "Book of Prefaces" says, "unquenchable, contagious, inflammatory."

The extent of the personal contact which Mr. Huneker enjoyed and maintained with the first-rate literary men of the world, was amazing. While I was with the bookshop I speak of, "presentation copies" of each new book of his, to be sent out "with the compliments of the author", were piled up for forwarding literally several feet high. They went to all the great in letters, in every country, that you could think of. Anatole France, Joseph Conrad, Georg Brandes, Edmund Gosse, George Moore—people like that.

Vast was the incoming str

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books to him: presentation copies, review copies, publicity copies; so great a flood that it was necessary for him periodically to call in an old book man to clear his shelves by carting away a wagonload or two of genuine treasure. A catalogue I one time saw of such volumes "from the library of James Huneker" was sufficient in riches to have been the catalogue of the entire stock of a very fair shop dealing in "association" volumes, first editions, and so forth. And a survey of the books themselves made it quite apparent that a reader who has read every word that Huneker ever printed (and that would be a person who has read a good deal) may yet (very likely) be a reader who has not read some of the best of Huneker. I refer to "Jimmie's" humorous, pungent marginalia.

Mr. Huneker's close friends have taken occasion since his death to speak warmly of his kindness toward obscure, struggling talent. There was a side to him, akin to this, which I have not seen commented upon. Huneker's fame as a critic had been for years accepted throughout Europe. When his "New Cosmopolis" was published (a book I did not myself think so highly of) Joyce Kilmer, then newly come to journalism, reviewed it for the New York "Times", very eulogistically. Mr. Huneker went to the trouble of looking up Kilmer to thank him very simply for his praise.

Mr. Huneker was a loyal and disinterested servant of good literature wherever he found it, and his happily was the power to be an ambassador to success—as in the case of William McFee's "Casuals of the Sea". Through my connection with the matter of "Casuals" I suppose it was, that a correspondence came about between Mr. Huneker and me. And in all my days I have never seen so energetic a correspondent. It seems to me that I got a letter from him about every other morning. I dropped out of the publishing business and went to Indiana for a time. I let him know when I got there, my motive in this being mainly to notify him that I *was* out of the publishing business and so was no longer in a position to give any business attention to letters relating to books. But letters from him continued to reach me with the same regularity. While, I hardly need say, I enjoyed this correspondence enormously, I was decidedly embarrassed by it, as I could not but keenly feel that I was taking up his time to no purpose. Still, of course, I felt that I should answer each letter of his without an impolite delay, and no sooner did he get my reply than he answered back again. Gradually, however, we got the thing slowed down.

His letters were prodigal of witty things. I am afraid I have not kept them; if I have, I do not know where they are—I move about a good deal. One neat play of words I remember. I do not know whether or not he himself ever used it elsewhere. I did use it in a book, giving due credit to Mr. Huneker. I had told him that I was going in for writing on my own. His comment was: "He that lives by the pen shall perish by the pen." Some of his letters, I recall, were signed, "Jim, the Penman."

And it was no simple trick to read them. He used a pale ink. The handwriting was small, curious, and to me almost illegible. Why compositors did not mob him I do not know. He wrote everything by hand; never would learn to use a typewriter, and declared that he could not acquire the faculty of dictation.

This leads me to the story of one of the articles he contributed to THE

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BOOKMAN. When, upon my return to New York, I became (for a time) editor of this magazine I pursued him for contributions. Yes, later on he would send us something, but always it was later on, later on. I had about given up hope of ever getting anything from him when a bulky wad of closely-written "copy" on yellow paper arrived. Expecting that it would take me a couple of days to decipher the manuscript, I joyously acknowledged receipt of it at once, without a thought of questioning the nature of the article. When I tried to read the article, after I had held the first page sidewise, next upside down, then examined it in a mirror, I "passed the buck" and sent the copy straight on to the printers. If printers had read him before printers ought to be able to again. I advertised the article to appear in the next number of the magazine. When I got the article back in galley proofs—I got a jolt. It wasn't "BOOKMAN stuff" at all—all about a couple of "old rounders", as Mr. Huneker called them, taking a stroll.

I do not think that Mr. Huneker has as yet since his death, to the time these rambling remarks are being written, received anything like adequate recognition in the press. The "obituary" articles in the newspapers have carried the air that he was hardly more than an excellent "newspaper man"—somewhat older, but something like (dare I say?) Heywood Broun or Alexander Woollcott. Ah! no; James Huneker was a critic and an artist, and a figure, too, in our national life. Though he was all his days until almost his last breath a hard-working journalist with an immediate "copy date" before him. And though he most naturally thought of himself, with common-sense pride in his calling, as a journalist. I remember his one time speaking of Arnold Bennett as "a hard-working journalist as well as a novel writer". Indicating his great esteem for the character of journalist. And he used to speak, too, with fraternal pride and affection in inflection, of young men who had written good books as being among "our men", meaning associated with the same paper as himself.

At the remarkable funeral service held in the new Town Hall in New York high and touching honor was done his memory by the stage and the musical profession, but literature seemed to be officially represented by the person of Richard Le Gallienne alone, and painting and sculpture not at all. The articles by Mr. Huneker's colleagues among music critics have seemed very largely to claim him as quite their own. True, no doubt, his most penetrating writing was done in the field of musical criticism. But, also, Huneker was an evangel who belongs to the Seven Arts.

One thing should be added. It is a sad thing, but it is of the nature of life. A good editorial in the current number of "The New Republic" begins: "James Huneker named one of his best books 'The Pathos of Distance'. In a single day his own figure is invested with the memorial gentleness there described." No, not altogether in a single day. He had already begun, and more than begun, to recede into the pathos of distance. His flair was for the championship and interpretation of the "new" men. And, for the most part, his new men had become old men. His stoutest admirer must admit that Mr. Huneker's work was "dated".

But where (and this is sadder still) is his like today?

MURRAY HILL

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THE POEMS OF THE MONTH

Selected by Louis Untermeyer

HOWEVER auspiciously the year may have begun (and I have yet to hear of a year that opened in any other way), the month of January was not distinguished by the verse printed in the magazines. There were about fifteen poems that attained the level of what has been called the "almost" school of poetry—straightforward and singing verse—verse like Albert Trombly's "Poetæ Minores" (from "The Nation"), John Hall Wheelock's "The Sorrowful Masquerade" (from "Poetry"), and Mary Carolyn Davies's "The Barred Door" (from "The Touchstone"), all of which lack, for all their pleasant measures, any distinction of utterance or trace of personality.

The exceptional group—and one that is in a class rigorously by itself—is another quartet by Robert Frost, this time in "The Yale Review". All four poems are in this poet's warmest lyrical vein—the mood that has been called his "later" manner but which, finding its first expression in "A Boy's Will", is a development of the early tendency. In fact, one of these poems—one which has been said to show an "improvement" in Frost's style—was written exactly fifteen years ago. "The Onset" is possibly the finest of the group—one of Frost's most frankly "poetic" poems—but "Misgiving" is its close second. Both of these mock the commentator who, conceding Frost's delineative power, speaks of his settings as "colorless" or "grey"; both are so full of purple patches that one can scarcely see the pattern. I quote the second, chiefly because "The Onset" will find its niche in so many anthologies that its scarcely lesser companion may not receive its due.

"The New Republic" continues to take long poetic strides upward. Even the two unworthy, misrepresentative pieces by W. H. Davies and de la Mare have not materially impeded its progress. This journal, which introduced Lola Ridge by printing "The Ghetto" in full, publishes (in its issue of January 26th) an entire page of poems by Elinor Wylie, a lyricist of—what are the phrases?—ah, yes—great promise and no little achievement. Barring a sentimental didacticism, her lines have a quiet power, a strength that is half concealed by the suavity of her verses. "The Eagle and the Mole" is the sharpest of her group.

In the same number of "The New Republic" appear two sonnets by Babette Deutsch. One of these is a piece of deliberate, cerebral, and wholly artificial rhetoric. The other is no less intellectual but it is as much riper in execution as it is richer in emotional communication. "Penreb's Tomb" justifies the praise accorded this young poet's sensitive first book, "Banners".

For a fourth choice, I have hesitated between William Carlos Williams's "A Goodnight" (from "Poetry") and Joseph Freeman's sonnet in "The Liberator". Freeman's poem, though not so violently individualized, is—in spite of its melodramatic final couplet—a poignantly conceived emotion communicated with an unusual breadth and dignity.

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MISGIVING

All crying, "We will go with you, O Wind,"
The foliage follow him, leaf and stem,
But a sleep oppresses them as they go,
And they end by bidding him stay with them.

Since ever they flung abroad in spring
The leaves have promised themselves this flight,
Who now would fain seek sheltering wall,
Or thicket, or hollow place for the night.

And now they answer the summoning blast
With an ever vaguer and vaguer stir,
Or, at utmost, a little reluctant whirl
That drops them no further than where they were.

I only hope that when I am free,
As they are free, to go in quest
Of the knowledge beyond the bounds of life,
It may not seem better to *me* to rest.

Robert Frost
—*The Yale Review*

PENREB'S TOMB

"Upon these stones Time broke his teeth," you said.
We stood in Penreb's tomb, and stared upon
The hammered blocks that held the royal dead
Whose pomp still stood, altho' his breath was gone.
You said, "Slaves sweated for that narrow room."
Their scattered bones are mixed with desert sand;
But on the high walls, ruddy in the gloom,
The files of the king's servitors yet stand.

We shall not rear to death such monuments
With massive marble, nor with crimson chalk.
Nor wrap our withered limbs in cerements
More spicy than our rare ephemeral talk.
So Time, who broke his teeth upon these stones,
Gnaws at our hearts, careless of Penreb's bones.

Babette Deutsch
—*The New Republic*

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

Elinor Wylie
—*The New Republic*

I SHALL LOVE YOU

I shall love you when you have learned to weep;
When sorrow, washing from your happy eyes
The mists of ignorance, the stains of sleep,
Shall leave you standing generous and wise
To brood upon the treason of the years,
The lure, the brevity, the certain ache
Of the world's fragile offerings. Such tears
As I or any man shall bring you—take.
For, having known and suffered, you will hold
All lovely things more dear because they move
In fugitive battalions manifold;
And you will love men with a fiercer love,
As if this very night the seas should rise
And, billowing madly, burst apart the skies!

Joseph Freeman
—*The Liberator*

EDITOR'S NOTE.—*Each month* THE BOOKMAN *will select a group of poems from the American periodicals. These will be submitted to a prominent poet or critic who will choose from them "The Poems of the Month", though he will be free to add any others he may prefer. Marguerite Wilkinson will act as arbiter for May and June. The complete list of poems selected will be found in the Gossip Shop.*

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PESSIMISM AND THE YOUNG AMERICANS

By Heywood Broun

BERT WILLIAMS used to tell a story about a man on a lonely road at night who suddenly saw a ghost come out of the forest and begin to follow him. The man walked faster and the ghost increased his pace. Then the man broke into a run with the ghost right on his heels. Mile after mile, faster and faster, they went until at last the man dropped at the side of the road exhausted. The ghost perched beside him on a large rock and boomed, "That was quite a run we had." "Yes," gasped the man, "and as soon as I get my breath we're going to have another one."

Our young American pessimists see man at the moment he drops beside the road, and without further investigation decide that it is all up with him. To be sure, they may not be very far wrong in the ultimate fate of man, but at least they anticipate his end. They do not stick with him until the finish; and this second-wind flight, however useless, is something so characteristic of life that it belongs in the record. I have at least a sneaking suspicion that now and again there happens along a runner so staunch and courageous that he keeps up the fight until cock-crow and thus escapes all the apparitions which would overthrow him. Of course, it is a long shot and the young pessimists are much too logical to wait for such miraculous chances. As a matter of fact, they don't call themselves pessimists, but prefer to be known as rationalists, realists, or some such name which carries with it the hint of wisdom.

And they are wise up to the very point of believing only the things they have seen. However, I am not sure they are quite so wise when they go a notch beyond this and assert roundly that everything which they have seen is true. For my own part I don't believe that white rabbits are actually born in high hats. The truth is quicker than the eye, but it is hardly possible to make any person with fresh young sight believe that. Question the validity of some character in a play or book by a young rationalist and he will invariably reply, "Why she lived right in our town", and he will upon request supply name, address, and telephone number to confound the doubters.

"Let the captious be sure they know their Emmas as well as I do before they tell me how she would act," wrote Eugene O'Neill when somebody objected that the heroine of "Diff'rent" was not true. This, of course, shifts the scope of the inquiry to the question, "How well does O'Neill know his Emmas?" Indeed, how well does any bitter-end rationalist know anybody? Once upon a time we lived in a simple age in which when a man said, "I'm going to kick you downstairs because I don't like you", and then did it, there was not a shadow of doubt in the mind of the person at the foot of the stairs that he had come upon an enemy. All that is changed now. During the war, for instance, George Sylvester Viereck

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wrote a book to prove that every time Roosevelt said, "Viereck is an undesirable citizen", or words to that effect, he was simply dissembling an admiration so great that it was shot through and through with ambivalent outbursts of hatred. Mr. Viereck may not have proved his case, but he did, at least, put his relations into debatable ground by shifting from Philip conscious to Philip subconscious.

In the new world of the psychoanalysts there is confusion for the rationalist even though he is dealing with something so inferentially logical as a science. For here, with all its tangible symbols, is a science which deals with things which cannot be seen or heard or touched. And much of all the truth in the world lies in just such dim dominions. The pessimist is very apt to be stopped at the border. For years he has reproached the optimist with the charge that he lived by dreams rather than realities. Now, wise men have come forward to say that the key to all the most important things in life lies in dreams. Of course, the poets have known that for years, but nobody paid any attention to them because they only felt it and offered no papers to the medical journals.

It would be unfair to suggest that no dreamer is a pessimist. The most prolific period of pessimism comes at twenty-one, or thereabouts, when the first attempt is made to translate dreams into reality, an attempt by a person not over-skilful in either language. Often it is made in college where a new freedom inspires a somewhat sudden and wholesale attempt to put every vision to the test. Along about this time the young man finds that the romanticists have lied to him about love and he bounces all the way back to Strindberg. Maybe he gets drunk for the first time and learns that every English author from Shakespeare to Dickens has vastly overrated it for literary effect. He follows the formulæ of Falstaff and instead of achieving a roaring joviality he goes to sleep. Personally tobacco sent me into a deep pessimism when I first took it up in a serious way. Huck's corncob pipe had always seemed to me one of the most persuasive symbols of true enjoyment. It seemed to me that life could hold nothing more ideal than to float down the Mississippi blowing rings. After six months of experimenting I was ready to believe that maybe the Mississippi wasn't so much either. Romance seemed pretty doubtful stuff. Around this time, also, the young man generally discovers, in compulsory chapel, that the average minister is a dull preacher; and of course that knocks all the theories of the immortality of the soul right on the head. He may even have come to college with a thirst for knowledge and a faith in its exciting quality, only to have these emotions ooze away during the second month of introductory lectures on anthropology.

Accordingly, it is not surprising to find F. Scott Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine looking at the towers of Princeton and musing:

> Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds through a revery of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into that dirty gray turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought; all faiths in man shaken....

Nobody wrote as well as that in Copeland's course at Harvard but there was a pretty general agreement that life—or rather Life—was a sham and a delusion. This was expressed in poems lamenting the fact that the oceans and the mountains were going to go on and that the writer wouldn't.

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Generally he didn't give the oceans or the mountains very long either. All the short stories were about murder and madness. We cut our patterns into very definite conclusions because we were pessimists and sure of ourselves. It was the most logical of philosophies and disposed of all loose ends. One of my pieces (to polish off a theme on the futility of human wishes) was about a man who went stark raving, and Copeland sat in his chair and moaned and groaned, which was his substitute for making little marks in red ink. He had been reading Sheridan's "The Critic" to the class with the scene in which the two faithless Spanish lovers and the two nieces and the two uncles all try to kill each other at the same time, and are thus thrown into the most terrific stalemate until the author's ingenious contrivance of a beefeater who cries, "Drop your weapons in the Queen's name." At any rate when I had finished the little man ceased groaning and shook his head about my story of the man who went mad. "Broun," he said, "try to solve your problems without recourse to death, madness—or any other beefeater in the Queen's name."

And it seems to me that the young pessimists, generally speaking, have allowed themselves to be bound in a formula as tight as that which has ever afflicted any Pollyanna. It isn't the sombreness with which they imbue life which arouses our protest, so much as the regularity. They paint life not only as a fake fight in which only one result is possible, but they make it again and again the selfsame fight.

THE PET

By Leonora Speyer

HOPE gnawed at my heart like a hungry rat,
Ran in and out of my dreams high-walled,
I heard its scampering feet:
"Pretty rat—pretty rat—!" I called,
And crumbled it songs to eat.

Hope peeped at me from behind my dreams,
Nibbled the crumbs of my melodies,
Grew tame and sleek and fat;
Oh but my heart knew ease
To feel the teeth of my rat!

Then came a night—and then a day—
I heard soft feet that scuttled away—
Rats leave the sinking ship, they say.

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IS THE TRANSLATOR WITHOUT A LITERARY CONSCIENCE?

By Julius Moritzen

AS far back, presumably, as the first translation of the Bible into English, the question of what to include and what to leave out must have agitated the minds of ecclesiastics and laymen alike. We know that coming down the centuries and passing through various stages of transition, the Great Book has been exposed to many interpretations, and expurgations have been brought into play when the period appeared to demand some change.

However, we shall concern ourselves not with the past but with the present, considering chiefly those works designed for American readers. What are the obligations of the translator to the author in the original; to the publisher, to the public? This question has in a measure been answered by a recent reviewer in "The New Republic"[1] who appears to take an uncompromising stand in favor of leaving out nothing—in such fiction, for instance, as "Ditte: Girl Alive" by Martin Andersen Nexö.

Nexö in the original Danish may be put down as a writer entirely unafraid. He is in a class with those realists who have battled persistently for recognition as pathfinders in a particular direction. To quote from the review in question:

> Nexö loves his characters; he bathes them in a warm clearness that is unforgettable. When one analyzes this, it consists in a choice of words. He doesn't make use of dialect or forced quaintness, he depends, if one may say so, on never getting out of the picture. He never uses a learned or a literary word. He hardly ever uses a word that his fishers and farmers wouldn't understand, or themselves use.

"Therefore", the reviewer affirms, "besides the beauty of simple peasant language, his book has also its unashamedness, its impolite realism in discussing natural functions. And here, of course, is where the Anglo-American translator and publisher step in with their pruning hooks."

And here, exactly, we may be allowed a momentary halt to get away from the opinion of an individual and make a somewhat wider survey as to what or what not is due an author like Martin Andersen Nexö, and American readers who wish to learn for themselves how this Danish writer treats of a society where the niceties of the conventions are not generally observed. There can be no question as to Nexö's remarkable powers of penetration, or his ability to make living his characters. The point at issue is simply how far the American reader can go along with this realist of realists in the presentation of facts as he sees them. And does expurgation necessarily mean that the translation is without value? In the present instance we are told that "Ditte: Girl Alive" in its English dress constitutes "the mutilation of a masterpiece". Signe Toksvig, the reviewer, then goes for translators in general. "Writers can't be expected to do translations; the work is so scan-

[1] December 22, 1920.

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dalously underpaid that they couldn't afford to devote the time necessary to it. Therefore publishers hire hacks."

What have you to say to this, Mr. Publisher? Is it really true that you are driven to hiring hacks for the purpose of translation? Well, hack writing has a rather noble history when we consider the great personalities who in their own days were penny-a-liners and now rest in the Hall of Fame! One must make a living, you know.

The reviewer in "The New Republic" takes the position that Scandinavian writers must expect to suffer more than writers translated from better-known languages.

> Sometimes it doesn't matter very much, as in the case of Johan Bojer, who is not a great writer; but it will matter when all of Hamsun comes to be translated, and it matters tremendously in the case of Nexö, who in "Pelle the Conqueror" and in "Ditte" has proved himself an artist whom the world should demand to know as he really is.

Now, it undoubtedly is true that there is some difficulty in translating from the Scandinavian languages, since the knowledge of these is not nearly so general as in the case of French or German, for instance. However, some great work has been done in this field by such men as William Archer and Gosse, Archer's rendering of Ibsen into English being a literary treat for those familiar with the great Norwegian dramatist in the original. Now all translators cannot be like these two Englishmen, but there are others who have done reputable work along the same lines. And to take another language somewhat out of the ordinary, namely Russian, see what Constance Garnett has been able to do with Dostoyevsky. Right here the writer of this semi-defense of the cautious translator may be stepping on thin ice, for Dostoyevsky is never a prude and frequently shocks the sensibilities. But let us agree at once that there is a difference between Andersen Nexö and the author of "The Brothers Karamazov". The Russian deals with problems that include much more than the lives of a few individuals. There is local color which has illimitable penetration. And the translation of all of Dostoyevsky really is masterly. Were all such perfect artists as Mrs. Garnett, perhaps little would be heard as to whether translation is literary art or not.

But to return to the subject of expurgations by the translator. The thing is put so well by a recent editorial writer in the New York "Evening Post"[2] that it bears repetition here as perhaps expressing the sentiments of many who are desirous of reading foreign literature and yet believe that a line should be drawn somewhere.

> The English tongue has become more squeamish and it is unfair to blame the writer or the publisher who, knowing this, refrains from inviting suppression, or at least an unfavorable verdict from the public. The translator is bound by contemporary conventions of speech and manners. A work written in a country where different conventions obtain is not assisted in its appeal to the English-speaking public by the use of words which will repel the average reader or actually lead to the complete withdrawal of the book. By all means let us raise the standard of translation, but let us not impose upon the translator the task of defying the conventions of his own tongue.

Speaking of Knut Hamsun and the expected translation of more books by this Norwegian Nobel prize winner, his "Hunger" in the original shows that he possesses the identical characteristics of "unashamedness" and "impolite realism" that the reviewer of "Ditte" in "The New Republic" believes give the Danish author such distinctiveness. Well, Hamsun offers the same handicaps to the translator as does Nexö, but it can be said for "Hunger" in its English dress that it is suf-

[2]December 23, 1920.

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ficiently burdened with the things that many American readers do not care for to place it in the class of necessary expurgation.

The fact stands out that in many instances the meaning conveyed in one language defies interpretation in another. Idea and expression are bound up with each other like Siamese twins, their existence interdependent. Here is a condition of primary importance whenever the question of adequate translation arises. Then again, no translator can go at his task thoroughly equipped unless he knows both languages equally well.

In one respect Miss Toksvig's criticism of "Ditte: Girl Alive" is entirely justified. The title means little and is, in fact, a misnomer. Nexö entitles his novel, "Ditte Menneskebarn" (Ditte, Child of Man). This, of course, means as little as does the title actually given the book in English. However, this brings up another question which may be left to another time and place.

If better translations are obtainable by better payment for the work on the part of the publisher, here are certain obligations that the reading public has a right to see fulfilled. The American public has the great quality of being unsuspecting. But the fact that certain passages deemed too coarse and indecent in English are omitted or modified in a book like "Ditte", should not be cast up against the translator or the publisher. Accuracy does not necessarily mean a complete rendering of the foreign work into English. It is perfectly proper for any reviewer to enter wholeheartedly into the task of a minute examination of what constitutes the makeup of a book and render a verdict accordingly. "Mutilation" of "masterpieces" unquestionably is an unpardonable literary sin. But really, in the present instance, Nexö's book is not considered a masterpiece in his own country by critics who ought to know; and so far as mutilation of "Ditte" is concerned, well, it is a quite readable book. It would, of course, have been better if there had been some mention of the fact that further volumes are to follow in this series portraying Danish realism.

In the opinion of this writer, the reply of Robert Cortes Holliday to the reviewer of "Ditte", as published in a letter to the editor of "The New Republic",[3] is a very sane and comprehensive answer to the matter in dispute. He attacks the problem from an angle that is far from prejudicial, and merely objects to such critics as run wild when a translator and a publisher feel that there is something due the sensibilities of the American reader. Of course, taste differs. We cannot all have the same viewpoint. But why invite a foregone censorship, and cause the authorities to suspect that "health" regulations have been violated when "fumigation" should have been an essential?

The editor of "The New Republic", exercising his prerogative, allows the reviewer of "Ditte" to add a footnote to Mr. Holliday's criticism of the review. The only thing about this counter-reply worth mentioning is a statement in the closing sentence that "if a book is to published the public should be let judge for itself in regard to the text". Meaning, of course: first publish the book, no matter whether or not it outrages the good taste of a great many readers, and then take the consequences.

[3]January 26, 1921.

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THE SKETCH BOOK

THE DICKENS OF IT

By Keith Preston

SWINGING along through the ages with H. G. Wells, no more than any other reader could we pause to reflect or question. Not until we came to page 676 of the second volume of "The Outline of History" did we recall that in the back of our head a still small something had been a-troubling of us for some time. What could it be, and when did it start? After much knitting of the brows and scratching of the head, we recalled that our subliminal bedevilment had begun on page 530 of the first volume, with the following text:

> If the prominent men of this or that British or Gallic city lacked any profound Greek culture themselves, they could always turn to some slave or other, whose learning had been guaranteed of the highest quality by the slave-dealer, to supply the deficiency.

Here it was that we were first reminded of the experts who had assisted at the birth of "The Outline of History" and who hide their diminished heads in the footnotes of the same. Was Mr. Wells quite respectful to his experts? Where, in the first place, did he derive his conception of experts? This last seemed after all to be the main question, and on this we concentrated with complete success. We find that Mr. Wells owes his conception of experts to the immortal Mr. Boffin in Charles Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend".

Like H. G. Wells, Mr. Boffin had achieved the highest success in a practical line. At the peak of this practical triumph, Mr. Boffin conceived a cultural project of the first magnitude, a course of historical reading which should include the most solid and serious thought upon man, his achievements, and his destiny. Certain difficulties of time and mechanical equipment at first seemed to interfere. How did Mr. Boffin meet these difficulties? By the idea of experts. In his own words:

> "Now, it's too late for me to begin shoveling and sifting at alphabeds and grammar books. I'm getting to be an old bird, and I want to take it easy. But I want some reading.... How can I get that reading, Wegg? By", tapping him on the breast with the head of his thick stick, "paying a man truly qualified to do it, so much an hour (say twopence) to come and do it."

The reader must beware of forcing an attractive analogy, especially of forcing it beyond the point where it flatters Mr. Wells. It is all very well to admire the economy of time and the enlargement of scope secured by the employment of experts, whether the beneficiary be a Boffin or a Wells. But Mr. Boffin was entirely too deferential to Mr. Silas Wegg, his expert, *with* a wooden leg.

"I don't", said Boffin, in a free-handed manner, "want to tie a literary man—*with* a wooden leg—down too tight."

Mr. Wells has tied his experts (with no wooden legs to tax his compassion) in double bowknots; he has trussed them and stowed them in the footnotes. Still more must the reader beware of applying to our author phrases used only of the expert:

"A certain loftiness, likewise, took possession of Mr. Wegg; a condescending sense of being in request as an official expounder of mysteries."

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Mr. Boffin, a humble sort of person, was unable to defend himself against the arrogance of his expert. Mr. Wells, a man of independent thought, has guarded himself against expert impositions; he has sternly repressed that tendency to oppose facts against ideas which is the first and probably the greatest danger in the employment of literal-minded experts.

The legitimate applications of our analogy are, after all, sufficiently numerous. Taking the classical period, with which Boffin started, we find that both Boffin and Wells relied chiefly on Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". The set used by Boffin and Wegg was in "8 wollumes"; exact data on Mr. Wells's edition are lacking. Both Wells and Boffin were apparently familiar with Polybius, "pronounced Polly Beeious, and supposed by Mr. Boffin to be a Roman virgin". In this connection we would note that both Wells and Boffin seem to have had certain scandalous interpretations imposed upon them by their experts. In the case of Mr. Wells, this is particularly apparent in the account of Julius Cæsar.

"There can be little doubt", says Mr. Wells, "that he was a dissolute and extravagant young man—the scandals cluster thick about his sojourn in Bithynia."

Mr. Wells likewise refers delicately if not darkly to Cæsar's "amorous pleasantries with Cleopatra", hints that the hussy followed Julius to Rome, and concludes:

"Such complications with a woman mark the elderly sensualist or sentimentalist—he was fifty-four at the commencement of the *affaire*—rather than the master-ruler of men."

Now we are not so much concerned with defending the late Julius (though, hussies or no hussies, we are still convinced that he was a very able person), as we are with inquiring whether Mr. Wells's judgment in this matter accords with his judgment in his novels. Were Mr. Wells's fictional heroes subject to such discipline? Not as we remember. What is the difference between novels and history?

"The difference, sir?" says Mr. Wegg. "There you place me in a difficulty, Mr. Boffin. Suffice it to observe, that the difference is best postponed to some other occasion when Mrs. Boffin does not honor us with her company. In Mrs. Boffin's presence, sir, we had better drop it!"

The truth is that Mr. Wells, possibly on advice of his particular Mr. Wegg, or some other among the council of experts, seems in "The Outline of History" abnormally concerned with Mrs. Boffin, or Mrs. Grundy, or Mrs. Potter. Rereading our "Outline of History" we frequently feel the presence of Mrs. Boffin. Under her eye Mr. Wells has been as unfair to Cæsar, Napoleon, and some others as we, in this little paper, have tried to be to Wells. For Boffinizing history is a game that two can play at, and the reader must be on his guard against taking the results too seriously.

WHO IS OPAL WHITELEY?

By Fred Lockley

HERE in Oregon, we need a Pudd'n-head Wilson. Is Opal Whiteley the real Opal Whiteley, or isn't she? If she isn't, who is she? If she is the real Opal Whiteley, why does she claim to be somebody else? If she isn't Opal Whiteley, why is it that she looks so much like the other Whiteley children? But whether Opal is the real Opal or whether she is someone else,

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it cannot be denied that this girl, raised in the backwoods of Oregon, has created a great stir in literary circles.

Opal Whiteley, of Cottage Grove, was born—that is, if she is the real Opal Whiteley—at Colton, Washington, on December 11, twenty-four years ago. If she is not Opal Whiteley, where and when she was born may forever remain a matter for conjecture.

I have talked with Opal's sister Chloe whom, by the way, she greatly resembles. I have talked with her Aunt Etta, with her Uncle Tom Scott of Cottage Grove, and with her grandmother at Saginaw, Oregon. I have also interviewed many of Opal's former schoolmates and fellow workers in the Christian Endeavor Society, as well as many oldtime residents of Cottage Grove, who have known her since she was a little tot.

In Opal's diary, supposed to have been written when she was six or seven years old, she says:

> Of the days before I was taken to the lumber camp, there is little I remember.... In those days before I came to the lumber camps, there were walks in the fields and woods. While on these walks, Mother would tell me to listen to what the flowers and trees and birds were saying. We listened together. On the way, she told me poems and other lovely things, some of which she wrote in the two books and also in others.... No children I knew,—there were only Mother and the kind woman who taught me and looked after and dressed me, and the young girl who fed me and there was Father, in those few days when he was home from far lands.... There was one day when I went with Mother in a boat. It was a little way on the sea. It was a happy day. Then something happened and we were all in the water. Afterwards, when I called and called for Mother, they said the sea waves had taken her and she was gone to heaven. The time was not long after that day with Mother in the boat when one day the kind woman who taught me and took care of me did tell me gently that Father too had gone to heaven while he was away in the far lands. She said she was going to take me to my grandmother and grandfather, the mother and father of my father. We started,—something happened on the way, and I was all alone. There were strange people that I had never seen before. I was afraid of them. They made me keep very still and we went for no walks in the fields, but we traveled a long way. Then it was they put me with Mrs. Whiteley.

There you have Opal's story. What are you going to do with it?

Some of Opal's friends think she is a genius, while others are of a decidedly different opinion. Is it a case of a prophet not being without honor save in his own country?

The first time Opal became a front page story for the local newspapers was in 1911, at a Christian Endeavor convention held at Cottage Grove. At that time, she was a dark-haired, intense little girl with big black eyes, who was terribly in earnest and gave wrapt attention to the speakers. G. E. Baker, at that time state president of the Christian Endeavor for Oregon, was attracted by her wonderful knowledge of nature. When she asked him how she could be most useful, he advised her to gather the children in the neighborhood together and form a Christian Endeavor society. So remarkable was her work at the little lumber town of Star, that she was invited to be a speaker at the state Christian Endeavor convention at Eugene. This little mountain girl, absolutely at ease in addressing the audience, captured the convention. Immediately thereafter she was appointed state superintendent of Junior Endeavor. She traveled all over the state, making addresses at institutions and conventions and before capacity audiences in the larger cities of the state.

"No," said Mr. Baker, "I cannot associate Opal in my mind with trickery or deceit. She was imaginative and fanciful and often saw things in nature that I could not see, but during

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all the months that she lived at our home, she was truthful. When she was yet in her early teens, she spoke before several thousand people at the Gladstone Chautauqua assembly. In 1918 Opal gave a series of lectures on nature study in Los Angeles. She spoke on such subjects as 'The Fairyland Around Us' and on 'Music and Out of Door Musicians' and on 'The Relationship between Nature and Art'. Yes, I know you will find lots of people who claim that Opal is a persistent publicity seeker, but I will always believe that she is a genius and I believe an examination of her literary work will prove my contention."

When I was in Cottage Grove, I asked Elbert Bede, editor of the Cottage Grove "Sentinel", if Opal were different from her playmates. He said, "Opal may be pretty,—I never noticed. The impression you carry away, after talking with her, is that her expression is one of innocence, eagerness, and intelligence."

Another oldtime acquaintance, when asked to describe Opal, said, "I don't just know how to describe her. She is so enthusiastic, so much interested, that it looks as if her soul were too large for her body and kind of overflowed through her eyes. Her acquaintances use all sorts of adjectives, —if they are friendly, they describe her as 'alert, eager, alive, and spiritual'; if they are unfriendly, they say she has a queer look in her eyes,— that she acts sort of odd and that they believe she is a faker."

Sitting in the "parlor" of her grandmother's house at Saginaw, Oregon, I talked to Mrs. Scott. She is the very kind of person you would select to pose as a grandmother. And no hen that hatched a duckling and saw it, for the first time, go into the water, could be more distressed than is Mrs. Scott over her granddaughter's behavior.

Pointing to the enlarged crayon photograph on the wall, Mrs. Scott said, "Those are my husband's folks, —that is Opal's grandfather, Milton Scott, and her great-grandmother, Mary Ann Christopher Scott. She is the one that Opal used to love so and call 'my little grandmother'. She was always patient with Opal's queer ways and I think that is the reason why Opal set such store by her. My maiden name was Achsah Pearson. I was born back in Missouri in 1853. We came west when I was four years old. When I was twenty, I married Leonidas Scott. We had seven children. Mary Elizabeth, our first child, is Opal's mother. We were up working in the Palouse Valley in Washington. While we were there, my oldest girl met Ed Whiteley, who was working on a farm at Granite Point near Colton. We moved to Walla Walla, where my husband got work. Ed soon came down and got a job on a farm nearby and he and Lizzie kept company. Ed and Lizzie were married at Walla Walla. After a spell, they went back to Colton. Ed rented a farm there. Ed and Lizzie had five children. Opal is the oldest. Then came Pearl, Fay, Chloe, and Elwin. When Opal was still a little baby, Lizzie came down to visit us at Cottage Grove and Opal had her first birthday with us. When Opal was four years and eight months old, Ed and Lizzie came to Cottage Grove with their little ones to live.

"You want to know what I think about the mystery about Opal? I'll tell you mister,—the honest truth. There's no mystery,—except the mystery of why Opal wants to disown her own folks and how she can get people to believe that she is an adopted baby. See that picture taken when Opal and

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Pearl were little girls? You can see that they look almost like twins. Look at this picture of Lizzie, Opal's mother, when she was young. She and Opal look as much alike as two peas in the same pod. Go out and talk to Opal's sister Chloe and you can see that Opal and Chloe look too much alike not to be sisters. Maybe Opal really believes she is an adopted child. I hate to think she is saying so if she doesn't believe it. Maybe she has got to studying about it till she really thinks that they changed children on the way from Colton to our place here in Cottage Grove. I never did understand Opal. She used to climb up in a big evergreen tree over the pig pen and go into a kind of brown study and sometimes fall out of the tree and fall in the pig pen. Switching her didn't seem to do much good. When I would talk to her, she would look at me as solemn as an owl and when I was all through, she would say, 'What did you say, I was thinking about something else'; and I would have to spank her all over again. For my part, I am glad that the other children aren't like Opal, for she certainly was very trying. But you couldn't help loving her, in spite of her trying ways, for she was cunning and awfully knowing. She used to tell awful lies when she was little, about what the toads and birds and snakes said to her, just as if toads and bugs could talk.

"Opal graduated from the grammar school at Cottage Grove when she was thirteen. I thought maybe she would get over her queer ways, but she didn't. She nearly worried Lizzie, her mother, to death, asking questions about all sorts of things all the time. Opal was awfully set and she generally got her own way. She and Pearl used to have lots of spats. She spent all the time she could get away from the house out of doors. She said she was listening to what the wind and the trees and the stars said to her. When she was about eleven, she began collecting bugs and caterpillars and other dead things. She always did think that whatever she said or did was very important."

Which door did she open? Did the Lady or the Tiger come out? Is Opal, Opal Whiteley, the daughter of a lumberjack and a mother of modest education, or is she someone else? Did Opal actually write this diary when she was six or seven years old, or did she write it, as some of her classmates claim, when she was a student at the University of Oregon? You'll have to settle it for yourself. It's too much for me.

DUNSANY FOR SHORT

By John Black

(The writer was a member of an Anglo-American party of authors, artists, and journalists which was entertained for a month last summer by the Czecho-Slovakian government, in Prague, the republic's capital. Lord Dunsany, the playwright and poet, a few of whose adventures are here chronicled, was one of the guests; the others included Mr. H. G. Wells and Mr. Robert Nichols. The writer describes Lord Dunsany's experiences as they impressed him at the time.)

THERE were, to be sure, extenuating circumstances. It wasn't Dunsany's fault, as he himself pointed out, that he was born a baronet. Indeed, his efforts to overcome that handicap have been highly laudatory. But perhaps you have forgotten? First of all, he proclaimed himself a poet—and allowed his verses to go into print under his own name. That disconcerted the peerage. Then he appeared in public, lecturing on contemporary letters before all sorts of people. That disconcerted the literati.

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Then he came to America as an ordinary author, engaged by an ordinary lecture bureau—and accompanied by his wife. That disconcerted Newport's eligible-hunting mammas. It was all daring enough, and it should have warned us, even before we found that Dunsany was to be with us, that he would be like to countenance no such nonsense as recognition of rank. But one always does overlook the obvious. And we took Dunsany at face value. We took him for what he was: a member of the peerage and the scion of a *very* old family. And we were properly impressed.

So deep, indeed, was that impression, that when Dunsany had his first little *contretemps* at Nuremberg with a German policeman, we just smiled indulgently, and rejoiced to find him safely back in our midst again. For my part, I never did believe that Dunsany said "I am Lord Dunsany" to the policeman when the Teuton disciple of law and order threatened to arrest him for sitting on that lovely old bridge. Dunsany isn't that sort. More likely he took the bluecoat by the arm and asked him what he thought of the present vers libre movement. At any rate, Germans—and German policemen, in particular—are still *persona non grata,* and we of the Czecho-Slovakian special were quite ready, when Dunsany arrived (half an hour late) to make a place for him at the luncheon table.

We were conscious of a thrill of relief, however, when our train rolled out of the Nuremberg station—with Dunsany in his carriage. There had been a little uneasiness on that latter point: someone raised the question while we were trying in broken French to carry on a conversation in German. And, of course, it was disquieting! After several minutes of silly scurrying to and fro, we found Dunsany comfortably ensconced in his seat on the train, waiting for us to join him.

It was shortly after this that the question came up as to how we should address the nobleman. It was a serious problem to us. As one Londoner put it: "He's the only Lord we have"—and we were anxious, naturally enough, to acquit ourselves creditably. On the other hand, there were signs—and we couldn't deny them—of Dunsany wishing to be treated as nothing more than a regular fellow. And he *was* a pretty good chap, at that! We had cast a unanimous ballot to that effect when we found he wasn't lost in the Nuremberg station. And Robert Nichols was of our opinion. Now I think of it, it was Nichols who finally settled the question. Someone overheard him call Dunsany by his surname. The rest was easy.

I won't tell the story of what happened the day of Dunsany's play in Prague. We had agreed to forget that. To be sure, it would be awfully interesting stuff to read, and would help wonderfully in filling out this article. But then, we had decided it wouldn't be quite fair to him; and one must keep one's word. Anyway, it *was* vexatious—to be denied the chance of making a speech at the premier of one's own play! We would have been petulant ourselves! And, as to those waiters going on strike merely because a plate was thrown on the floor—well, there are limits, even to democracy.

No, it was all very unfortunate—and no one regretted it more than Dunsany himself. He discussed it with us the following day (he was feeling quite himself then) and we all voted it a closed incident. No one could have done otherwise. The trip

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was too thorough a success to permit its being marred by any such triviality. And what a triumphant conclusion it had! Dunsany was kindliness itself. He came back on the train with us from Prague to Paris. That was a twenty-four hour ride; and we talked—so far as an unspeakable roadbed would permit!—of poetry and poems, and rhythms and rhymes.

The train ride came to an end too soon. I last saw Dunsany propelling three porters heavily laden with Dunsany hats, Dunsany suitcases, and Dunsany trunks, toward a taxi outside the Gare de l'Est. It was a memorable picture.

HJALMAR SÖDERBERG

By Charles Wharton Stork

A STOUT, shortish man of fifty, very homely, with a florid face and vest—such was my vision of Söderberg at the doorway of his little apartment in Copenhagen last May. In manner he was courteous but utterly noncommittal; neither stolid nor phlegmatic—as Swedes are supposed to be—and yet as impersonal as a photographic plate. At the same moment he stimulated and baffled: what was going on behind those blue, observant eyes that took in so much and gave out so little?

Such is the deft satirist, the perfect composer and portrayer of surface portraits, the master of simple-subtle prose. Söderberg is the Anatole France of Sweden; no less finished, hardly less original, and to the full as sceptical. He does not believe in morals, progress, immortality, or God. His creed may be summed up in the words of one of his characters: "I believe in the lust of the flesh and in the irremediable loneliness of the soul."

Söderberg has but three novels, a play, and half-a-dozen small volumes of short stories to his credit, yet he is reckoned one of the chief artists in a rich and active literature. He is incorrigibly lazy. He scorns to write from his emotions, to "cut himself up into small pieces", to "play with dolls". He writes only of what he sees and thinks, and, as he says with half-ironic regret, "I think so little! That is why I'm so poor." When a group of writers were discussing what they would do if they could get American prices for their stories, Söderberg remarked, "At that rate I'd only have to write one-tenth as much."

The skill of Söderberg consists in the truthfulness of his eye, his uncanny power of finding the significant in the trivial, and the perfect smoothness and naturalism of his method. No incident is too insignificant or too commonplace for him to use in bringing out the meaningless pathos of life as he sees it. His pessimism, his negation of all things, comes doubtless from his isolated and selfish point of view. He has not lived actively or generously. And yet he can teach the enthusiast a great deal, just as the scientific expert can teach the philanthropist. To the lover of prose fiction his keen insight gives a pleasure not yet to be found in any writer of English. Not a shade of thought, not a detail of description is out of place, and slight-seeming sketches may be studied indefinitely. He is a Ver Meer, a Degas, an artist's artist.

THE DRAWING IN INDIA INK

Translated from the Swedish of Hjalmar Söderberg

By Charles Wharton Stork

One day in April many years ago, in the time when I still wondered about

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the meaning of life, I went into a little cigar booth on a back street to buy a cigar. I selected a dark and angular El Zelo, stuffed it into my case, paid for it, and made ready to go. But at that moment it occurred to me to show the young girl who stood in the booth, and of whom I used often to buy my cigars, a little sketch in India ink, which I happened to have in my pocket-book. I had got it from a young artist, and to my thinking it was very fine.

"Look here," said I, handing it to her. "What do you think of that?"

She took it in her hand with interested curiosity and looked at it very long and closely. She turned it in various directions, and her face took on an expression of strained mental activity.

"Well, what does it mean?" she asked finally with an inquisitive glance.

I was a little surprised.

"It doesn't mean anything in particular," I answered. "It's just a landscape. That's the ground and that's the sky and that there is a road—an ordinary road—"

"Yes, I can see that," she interrupted in a somewhat unfriendly tone; "but I want to know what it *means*."

I stood there embarrassed and irresolute; I had never happened to think that it ought to mean anything. But her idea was not to be removed; she had now got it into her head that the picture must be some sort of "where is the cat?" affair. Why otherwise should I have shown it to her? At last she set it up against the window pane so as to make it transparent. Presumably someone had once shown her a peculiar kind of playing card, which in an ordinary light represents a nine of diamonds or a knave of spades, but which, when one holds it against the light, displays something indecent.

But her investigation brought no result. She gave back the sketch, and I prepared to leave. Then all at once the poor girl grew very red in the face and burst out, with a sob in her throat:

"Shame on you! It's real mean of you to make a fool of me like that. I know very well I'm a poor girl and haven't been able to get myself a better education, but still you don't need to make a fool of me. Can't you tell me what your picture means?"

What was I to answer? I should have given much to be able to tell her what it meant; but I could not, for it meant precisely nothing.

Ah well, that was many years ago. I now smoke other cigars, which I buy in another shop, and I no longer wonder about the meaning of life—but that is not because I think I have found it.

THE ANCESTOR OF THE "JUMPING FROG"

By Frank R. Morrissey

OCCASIONALLY it is given to lesser mortals not only to read the fiction of the gifted ones, but also to glimpse the skeleton of truth upon which the wordy flesh has been grown. For some such an experience holds no more of romance than watching a play from the wings; for other, more blessed, souls the insight serves to arouse further admiration at the deft touches that have made fancy far more pleasant than fact.

In those golden days in Virginia City of which Mark Twain writes so vividly in "Roughing It" there were

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four men whose names were linked like a Mexican puzzle ring—Mackay, Fair, Flood, and O'Brien, the euphony of the chain, by singular chance, following the order of their importance in "The Bonanza Four". Mackay was the dominating personality, by reason of his shrewdness, his prescience, his indomitable courage, and those other intangible qualities that make a man a leader. Yet for all this there was still something of the boy about him that drove him often to play, even when weighty affairs rested upon him.

Among the employees at the "Con. Virginia" mine was a man whose name is unimportant now, but whom Mackay rated as the best mine superintendent on the Comstock Lode. From him would Mackay tolerate familiarity, and between the two there existed a relationship that hinted not the least of master and man.

One day Mackay, coming unexpectedly into the office, found his superintendent and the paymaster on the floor measuring the distance between chalk marks. The superintendent explained that, coming down from the side of Mount Davidson, which looms tall above the Comstock, he had encountered a grasshopper of such remarkable agility that he had captured it in order to measure the length of its leap. The boy in Mackay swam to the surface and he instantly averred that, given time to search, he could find a dozen grasshoppers that would far outjump his superintendent's prodigy. The outcome of the challenge was a bet of proportions that made even blasé Virginia City gasp.

Mackay, with more pressing matters than hunting grasshoppers demanding his attention, dispatched two miners with a week's grub down California Gulch with instructions to bring back a choice selection of high and broad-jumping grasshoppers, promising a share of his winnings should they find him a champion. At the end of a week the men were back with a hundred grasshoppers of undoubted leg power. With the whole city interested in the wager, a chemist from the assay room, who had experimented, brought Mackay word that the least whiff of ammonia would inspire a grasshopper to outdo himself. Mackay tried the suggestion on a few of his "stable" and verified the assertion.

Having finally chosen his grasshopper Mackay notified his superintendent to bring on his jumper and prepare for defeat. The long office of the Consolidated Virginia mine was chosen as the field of contest. The superintendent placed his grasshopper on the chalk mark that marked the "take off" and touched it with a sharp stick. A cheer went up from his partisans as they viewed the length of the leap. With a grin of anticipated triumph Mackay placed his chosen challenger on the mark and, drawing a small bottle from his pocket, gave the "hopper" a whiff of the contents. The grasshopper seemed loggy and uncertain, so Mackay touched it with a match end. It hopped a few feeble inches and fell over on its side.

Amazement, chagrin, anger, flickered across Mackay's face, but like a true sport he ordered the bet paid. It was not until the superintendent had departed, gloating audibly, to celebrate at "The Crystal", that suspicion entered Mackay's mind. Calling for two other grasshoppers he tried to make them jump, with the same fatal results. Absently, to test the strength of his ammonia, Mackay placed the vial to his nostrils.

The odor of chloroform greeted him.

Substitute a country store for the Con. Virginia mine office, call John

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Mackay instead "this yere Smiley", and place his reliance in a frog named "Dan'l". Birdshot will produce the same effect on a frog as chloroform on a grasshopper, and is more picturesque. There you have the framework upon which a master sculptor of words can fashion "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County".

HIGH LIGHTS IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Russell E. Smith

1

A man was lazily scanning the cards in the public library file. The cleaning woman, wiping away the dust, stumbled against his feet. He told her, plainly, just how clumsy she was.

The woman worked in the library afternoons and cleaned offices downtown at night, thereby supporting an untoiling husband and two children.

The seeker after knowledge didn't work at all. His wife did that. By day, he lounged about the library, and when it closed he lounged about the pool room.

The cleaning woman was discharged for her clumsiness.

2

An ancient man, bearded, strange of eye, was dipping eagerly into old bound copies of magazines. He seemed almost wickedly exultant as he tore out several pages and slipped them into his unspeakable clothing.

When caught, it was discovered that he was a once-famous author, come to gloat over the printed relics of his past. The articles were in praise of his once-praiseworthy self. He had been coming to read them daily. Finally, the temptation was too great; he stole them.

The librarian did not prosecute.

3

At a table in the reference room sat a man of æsthetic appearance. He was well dressed. He busied himself quietly day after day in making voluminous notes from a pile of books at his elbow. A student, one would say, or a writer of essays perhaps, or a lecturer preparing to go on tour.

Not so. He is a polite swindler, taking valuable information from his books, mainly "Who's Who". He will use it later, in letters to persons of some importance in which he will claim mythical and ancient business, social or college acquaintance, and ask for a small loan "until better days dawn".

He hasn't worked in years, and he dresses better than the librarian.

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TWO POEMS

By Amy Lowell

AFTERGLOW

PEONIES
The strange pink colour of Chinese porcelains;
Wonderful—the glow of them.
But, my Dear, it is the pale blue larkspur
Which swings windily against my heart.
Other Summers—
And a cricket chirping in the grass.

A DIMENSION

TONIGHT I stood among roses
Watching the slow studding of the sky with stars.
The cat fawned upon me to play with him.
Poor little cat, you have only me,
Unless we add that delightful feather on the end of a whip.
I have flowers and the high green loveliness of an evening sky.
And I find them not worth your feather,
Since the earth happens to be round as an orange
And I am not possessed of seven league boots.

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THE LONDONER

The Publishing Season Again—The Cost of Books—A Defense of Booksellers—Strachey's "Queen Victoria"—J. D. Beresford as a Huntsman—His New Novel, and a Symposium on the Novel of the Future—Aldous Huxley's Coming Novel—"The Athenæum"—The Weekly Reviews—"The Man Who Did the Right Thing"—American Novels and Plays in England—A Strange Production of "The Tempest".

LONDON, *February*, 1921.

THE outlook here, as far as one can judge, remains black. I hear that publishers' lists are well on the meagre side for the spring season, and if there is no alteration for the better in trade conditions this trait will carry over into the autumn lists as well. On the other hand there are signs of greater activity for the second part of the year, and if only we can hold on with hope it may be possible that things will improve markedly. One fact emerges without doubt, and that is that prices will have to come down before bookselling and publishing can return to anything like approaching the normal. With all the popular clamor for economy people are not going to pay the present high prices for books. They cannot, or will not, afford them. Novels at the higher prices will have to be very much better before they will lure English folk into extravagant purchases. I heard recently of one book, unavoidably expensive, which was coyly regarded by a possible reader. He turned it over and over, asked the price, and, although it was the work of a famous writer, remarked: "I'll wait until the cheap edition comes out." It was not considered polite to answer, in the classic phrase: "There ain't going to be no cheap edition." But that is what it will come to.

* * * *

You cannot have cheap editions unless the publisher's first costs have been covered. That is axiomatic. With authors still very naturally demanding their normal royalties, and booksellers needing heavier discounts than ever in order to pay their rents and rates and taxes, the margins above sheer cost of manufacture are extraordinarily small. They are so small that new books have to sell in unheard of numbers in order that the printers and stationers and binders may be satisfied, and something left over to carry on the business of publishing. Say an author is accustomed to the receipt of a royalty of twenty per cent upon the publishing price; say the bookseller has to have a discount of 33⅓ per cent off the publishing price; say that the actual overhead working expenses of the publisher are twenty-five per cent of his turnover; and printing prices two hundred per cent above prewar figures; with binder's charges enormous (I forget the actual increases) and paper still very expensive, where does the publisher's profit come in? He tries to recover from the public by pricing books as high as he dare, and as low as he can if the manufacturing cost is to be covered. And the public refuses to buy at such prices. What readers of "The Daily Mail" call "the vicious circle" is completed. What remains but failure? Already most publishers have large numbers of books in their lists which

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have hitherto enjoyed steady sales, but which, owing to high costs, they are unable to reprint. They are thus losing quite a valuable source of revenue. They have to rely more and more upon the extra-pricing of books already produced at lower rates, and even this dodge is failing, because the binding makes the books really more expensive to produce, even when the sheets already exist. Something will have to go, and that means that wages will have to be reduced, royalties reduced, and relative profits will have to remain as reduced as they are at present. It is not a cheerful prospect.

It will be objected that publishers manage to survive, and that I am crying "Wolf!" It may be so, but the position is not so simple as it may seem to resolute optimists who bring inexperience and robust "common sense" to the problem. I should like some of the critics of the book world to play for a little while at publishing.

* * * *

I should also like these men to become booksellers for a time. We hear a lot of stuff about rapacious booksellers, but we do not realize what sort of wages are being paid in the book trade for skilled work. Nor do we understand the onus which the possession of a responsible position in the bookselling trade carries with it. Authors and publishers, of course, see only one side of the question. They want their own books sold and shown. If they cannot have their way there is only one course —abuse the bookseller. I do this myself. I abuse him all day and every day. I call him "Dog!" But hard words break no bones and mend no difficulties. They are so cheap, and so useless. And readers should bear in mind what the bookseller has to support.

The first thing he has to support is his own family. Strangely enough, a bookseller's family costs as much to keep as the family of an ordinary man. It does not subsist upon the dust which so relentlessly accumulates in the bookseller's shop. Nor upon the great spiritual value of the goods kept by the bookseller. Bookselling may be an honorable calling, but it is not so lucrative as most people imagine. For one thing, heavy stocks are necessarily carried. And this in spite of all our complaints of the impossibility of getting particular books which we happen to require in a hurry. Moreover, what has the poor man to go upon in ordering new books? Nothing but his training and his own insight. He orders books, and in many cases he orders wrongly. He works upon rough lines, upon an author's recommendation, upon his own taste, upon the representations of the publisher's traveler, upon just nothing at all except his belief that a certain number of persons may care to buy the book. He makes mistakes, both in ordering and passing the books which are shown to him. He is bound to do so. But whatever mistake he makes, the cheaper mistake is the refusal to buy a book. To refuse is safe policy with large numbers of books. Carried too far as a policy it means death to the business, but in large proportion it is safe with the safeness of timidity. It often carries the day.

In small towns, where the bookseller can reckon upon the familiar tastes of his regular customers, there is the chance of more daring. He can look at a book, and say to himself that Mr. This or Madam That will like such a book. He can calculate his potential market. But in large towns, although most traders have their regular customers, there is a far greater number of casual customers to be considered.

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The city bookseller is thus in a more hazardous position than his country rival. His margin for mistakes is larger. He can overstock his shop in less than no time with some of the supreme "duds" of the hour. These are books which he cannot sell, or which he may one day accidentally be able to sell. On such a day, no doubt, the bookseller enjoys some illicit pleasure not at all approvable. But he must take a fair proportion of what is submitted to him, because he must make a show of having in stock what the public wants. He takes thousands of books in the year, old and new; and the old, because they are calculable, are better stock, and are more readily ordered. But if he takes a "dud" he is left with "dud" stock, and if he passes a book the chances are that he will immediately have a startling application for it from a friend or admirer of the author. He is so used to imaginary demands that he is suspicious of them all. He may even be short in his replies to the friend. The friend reports. The author reports. The publisher complains. There is a breeze.

Again, take this question of books not in stock. I remember Wells once writing an essay (I fancy it is in "An Englishman Looks at the World") to tell how he vainly tried to obtain a copy of More's "Utopia". He said the booksellers did not know their business. A writer in an American paper has just complained in similar fashion of inability to get Franklin's "Autobiography". Here are two classics, you will say. Quite true. I admit the sin in each case to have been heinous. But there is a dreadful thing, which I must whisper to my readers lest they should become disillusioned, and that is that sometimes classics are not asked for from one year's end to another. I mean, particular classics. It is wrong, of course, and wicked of the bookseller not to realize just exactly which of several million books is likely to be required by the complainant at a given moment. But put the complainant in the bookseller's shop for a time. He would, in the words of the popular song, "be surprised" at the things which were asked for and the things which were not asked for. And booksellers suffer from space limitations. They cannot keep every book in stock, and it would be difficult to make any one man realize how his taste differs from that of the innumerable other people whom he sees hanging about in booksellers' shops.

There is no reason whatever why I should defend the bookseller. I once asked in a West End shop for a book of my own, and was laughed at by a stupid assistant who did not know the book. I have often failed to get books that I wanted as urgently. And I have seen shops choked with rubbish. But I must in justice admit that I have seen with my own eyes other people buying this rubbish, and proudly carrying about with them books which I would not be found wrapped in after death. The whole point is one of supply and demand. If a bookseller sells a book he orders more copies of it. If he is not asked for it he does not order copies. That is the whole thing.

* * * *

All this leads up to the fact that there are very few books for publishers to publish and for booksellers to fail to order. The best books issued this year are no more than one or two. The worst are competing in restricted myriads. That there are many to come which will be worth reading, I doubt. The most notable work of the spring season, I hazard, will be Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria", which will be out here in April. It is not a long

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book, but it is bound to be a highly original and sardonic work. The story told here is that Strachey expected to have to be very ruthless with the Queen, and as he progressed found so much to admire in her character that he remained to praise. May it be found so! But I was never one to be unduly depressed by this writer's candor. Some readers, of course, think that unless a work is adulatory it is disparagingly intended. Certainly Strachey's estimates were devastating; but that they were malicious I would deny with my last breath. Speaking of this, I am reminded that the other day, when a man was speaking to me about this very book, he said that the only essay in "Eminent Victorians" which had displeased him by its unfairness was the one on Dr. Arnold. I recalled, as a curious illustration of the legend of Arnold, that once, when I had engaged a new maidservant, I was waited upon by her father, a window-cleaner, rather drunk, who told me that he had perfect confidence in entrusting his daughter to my charge. He grew commendatory. He said, referring to myself: "I know what a gentleman is. I know what Arnold of Rugby means."

* * * *

Another conversational effort bears repetition here. The other day I met at luncheon a clergyman. He lived in Buckinghamshire. I asked him if he knew a certain village in South Bucks. He said, "Yes; but not well." I asked if he knew Winslow, a village in North Bucks. "Yes," he said. "That's my district." So I replied, "Oh. Do you know J. D. Beresford, who lives there?" His answer overwhelmed me. It was: "Yes, by *name*. But he's in the *hunting* set, and I can't afford to hunt!" What a strange world a country clergyman must inhabit if he does not know the callings of his more notable parishioners!

Beresford's new novel, "Revolution", is just out here, and is getting respectful reviews on account of its intellectual distinction and general quality. It is a tale of the future. Curious how impossible it is for reviewers to keep out of their notices of a book their temperamental hostility to certain political ideas. They do not seem able to judge without moral or political bias, in spite of all the nagging they have had on this very point. Beresford recently opened a sort of public debate in print (in "The Pall Mall Gazette"—from February 7th "The Pall Mall Gazette and Globe") on the subject of "The Future of the Novel". I have read some of the opinions expressed by prominent authors. Most of them seem to me to be very silly; but of course most of these men see as the novel of the future only that kind of novel which they are themselves hoping to be able to write. It is another case of bias. How can we foresee the novel of the future? I suppose I see as much current fiction as most people, and I am sure that I cannot observe any distinct trend in it. There is much imitation of older writers; but little originality is being shown by the rank and file. Of course, the truth is that younger men are not yet emerging as novelists. When they get a lead from their own generation perhaps something may be done; but until that day comes the chance of spotting what some hypothetical genius is going to do is remote. No such genius with a really creative gift is writing novels at present. May he soon begin.

* * * *

Some may question whether there is not this great innovator in Aldous Huxley, who belongs to the young gen-

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eration and is writing fiction. I admire Huxley's work tremendously, but he has not yet started to set the novel on a new pair of legs. When his novel comes, which I hope will be the autumn, it will be found, probably, brilliant indeed, but not upon a line which can be followed with advantage by young men and women anxious to win their spurs. In fact I suspect that it will be purely eccentric, for it is being written in the antique manner of Thomas Love Peacock. Nothing could be less rich soil for a "new" novel. Only Huxley could do such a book with effect. Several chapters of the novel have appeared in detached form in that singular periodical "Coterie". "Coterie" enshrines much of the best work of the young things, and it is not negligible. But it deals more in poetry than in prose fiction, and cannot be regarded as a fair index of what can be done in that direction.

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As I write a strange rumor reaches me, that "The Athenæum" may be suspended. I hope this is not true. "The Athenæum", even when it has been serious, has always stood for honesty of judgment. It has shown its preferences and prejudices, but in a perfectly open way, and the tone of its reviews has always been fair, and not obscurantist. The paper has been also, on the whole, exceptionally well written. If "The Athenæum" goes we shall only have left "The Times Literary Supplement" and "The London Mercury", neither of which quite fills the particular blank left by "The Athenæum", although both have qualities to which the other paper makes no claim. Purely literary journalism in England has never in recent years flourished with any vigor. The admixture of politics, which tends to drive literature into a badly-handled department in the back pages of the paper, where reviews appear often months after the books with which they deal are forgotten, is regarded as a necessity. And even so, I question whether the sales of all the weekly political-cum-literary weeklies are anything to lose one's head about. The smallness of such sales is a source of constant wonder to me. "The Spectator", I suppose, is still the biggest of them all, although "The Spectator" is not bright reading. Of some of the other weeklies I can see no trace of any sale. In fact it almost seems as if they must live upon some bountiful proprietors, unless they have some secret undiscoverable public of which one can form no conception. A great feature of the sales of all the weekly, monthly, and quarterly reviews is the uncanceled subscription carried on from year to year by many a local club, literary institution, or library. It is for such a nucleus that promoters of new periodicals of a similar class must sigh. But such institutions are very conservative, and just as they do not cancel subscriptions, so they do not embark upon subscriptions to new ventures. I know one editor who has for years been campaigning to have a copy of his paper on view in the smoking room of his own club. If it is there now the new phase must be due in good part to the friendly intervention of a rival editor.

* * * *

It will be good news for his innumerable American admirers that Sir Harry Johnston has not long completed a new novel dealing with life in East Africa. The book, which is called "The Man Who Did the Right Thing", will be published this spring by the Macmillan Company. It was remarked to me the other day, not in reference to Sir Harry Johnston's novel but

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with a general application, that while Americans readily welcome English fiction, English people are extremely shy of American books of any kind at all. There is something wrong here; but some of the blame attaches, perhaps, to the kind of novel which the best writers are producing at present in the United States. These books, close studies of civic life, are all but unintelligible to English readers. But there are some singular contrasts. We take to our hearts men such as Hergesheimer; but we will have nothing to do with Willa Cather or James Branch Cabell. What the cause is I cannot say, unless it is that English readers do not much care about merit, but only for particular individualities. That standard is the one which we notice in the rise of our own novelists. But when we do take to an American writer we sometimes, very late in the day, do the thing thoroughly. This is the case with "O. Henry". In days gone by vain attempts were made to sell his tales to English magazine editors. Do you suppose these attempts were successful? Not a bit of it. On the other hand, I see that several of the English magazines now issue stories of palpably American origin. Edgar Rice Burroughs is a case where early neglect has been followed by something approaching rapture. No prejudice seems to stop the success of American plays and American films. I therefore attribute the whole neglect of American novels to some curious difference in the taste of English and American readers. That this is a satisfactory explanation I do not pretend. I should be glad to know of any other.

* * * *

What points this perplexity is the strange success here of the dramatized version of "The Charm School", a novel of which we had not heard. That the book will now have a vogue here I do not doubt, and the author will also probably find in its train a vogue for her other works. It is true that the play is well acted, by some popular players; but the success of a play does not depend solely upon such things. Otherwise we should be able to fill our theatres with homegrown messes. It must be that we go to the theatres and the picture houses in a spirit different from that in which we choose our fiction. But we have made much of Jean Webster and Gene Stratton-Porter, and the latter has not had any theatrical success that I know of.

Talking of theatres reminds me that the new performance of "The Tempest" is being much discussed. It is probably the most multifariously concocted stew that has ever been cooked of any Shakespearian piece. So many different artists and costumiers have been allowed a free hand, that one scene no more follows upon the style of its predecessor than 1921 follows upon 1850. The mixture has led to great amusement, but the press of this production has been as various as its own ingredients. The Tree name is a great one to conjure with, and I suppose the play will have a run. But it is certainly a peculiar show, and I doubt whether it will serve to do more than amuse the public for a short time. Most of the poetry of "The Tempest" has been lost in the lavishness of the presentation, and even London theatrical audiences will come to that conclusion before long. I am reinforced in my opinion by that of an ingenuous young man of my acquaintance, who naively said that he had looked forward to this particular show more than he could remember having looked forward to anything for years. His verdict was distinctly adverse.

SIMON PURE

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WHAT'S WHAT AMONG THE SPRING BOOKS

IN the course of nature spring will soon melt the snow on the Vermont hills, if it has not already accomplished that feat, whereupon the brooks will flood the valleys, and Robert Frost, watching the budding trees from his new house on the Shaftsbury line, will write a ditty to "Nature Triumphant". In February, however, there were few signs of spring at the Frost mansion. We had come perilously along an innocent-appearing road from Bennington. The ruddy-cheeked chauffeur of our chariot, obviously more used to the hay-wagon than the flivver, said as we took a bump and a long skid, "It's queer how snow has a habit uh hidin' things, ain't it?" In the midst of drifting snows, then, we found Mr. Frost, and farther along the same road at Arlington, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, busily correcting proofs on her new novel "The Brimming Cup". They seemed to lap eagerly what few crumbs of book news we could give. Now, however, the publishers' catalogues are probably flooding them, together with the April freshets.

Well, Mr. Frost and Mrs. Fisher, perhaps you will not find the moment (alas, it will take you longer than that) to extract the meat from that maze of euphuistical print. Shall I attempt to mention only a few? Any published list is sure to be inadequate. May I hope, only, that I do not omit your favorites, and that I suggest one or two worthy newcomers? It is a long, long list, and the space is small.

The past year has been one of delight and surprise in the publishing world. The discouragement of heavy manufacturing costs, not yet perceptibly lightened, has not stopped the output of books. In the fall there was perhaps a slight decrease in the number of volumes on the lists. This spring, though, we are forging strongly ahead. A year that has given us our crop of new American novels is indeed significant. Our wartime tastes have been changing appreciably. We are no longer very greatly interested in spiritualism, and the ordinary editor and publisher looks with horror on a book which has, even for its remote background, the war. Later, a point on this. Travel books are again being read, and the summer will be made terrible for Europe by the conventional American tourist. Most of our authors are leaving New York City; the older ones going invariably to the mine of movie gold at Hollywood, the younger ones nursing their revolted spirits in foreign lands where blue laws are unknown. We may therefore expect the fall lists to include at least one great Hollywood novel and any number of foreign "impressions".

Fiction overwhelms one; and in spite of what some people believe to be a change in the desires of our reading public, manifested by the success of "Main Street" and the other great four, the book jackets still flaunt purples and yellows like mad forest flowers of the Hebrides—or perhaps Afric's climes is the phrase. Fortunately all covers do not resemble all jackets, and what's within has little relation either to jacket or cover. Many of the old names persist: the Lincolns, Joseph and Natalie; Tarkington, Kelland, and I. A. R. Wylie;

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Morley, Oppenheim, Marshall, Phillpotts, and Eleanor Porter; Aumonier, Sidgwick, Chambers, the Williamsons, Honoré Willsie, Ethel M. Dell, and Sara Ware Bassett. Let's made a song of them. Give 'em the proper rhythm and swing along: Carolyn Wells and Harry Leon Wilson, Inez Haynes Irwin and Fannie Hurst, Hal G. Evarts and James Oliver Curwood, Stephen McKenna and Thomas Burke, H. de Vere Stacpoole and Grace Livingston Hill, W. Somerset Maugham, Octavus Roy Cohen, and H. Rider Haggard.

At least three poets have turned novelist in spite of what some reviewers thought of "Mitch Miller". Now, I liked young Mitch; but that's another matter. Berton Braley challenges the movies with "The Sheriff of Silver Bow"; Mary Carolyn Davies has a most provocative title, "The Husband Test"; but I shall be partial to Eunice Tietjens of Chicago, "Poetry" fame. My parrot has an excellent name—it is monosyllabic but excellent nevertheless; let me introduce the novel and the parrot (or rather parakeet, green with orange about the eyes)—"Jake".

The new Walpole novel will be dedicated to Joseph Hergesheimer and will bear the motto: "After they were blown up, they were blown down again, and then had to pause for a moment to get their breath"—whatever that may mean. Frank Swinnerton tells us that "They Went" by Norman Douglas was one of the extraordinary books of the year in England. I am looking forward to trying to fathom what is said to be a brilliant but a difficult book. A first novel by Gerald Cumberland should be interesting if "The Poisoner" has any of the biting quality of his earlier sketches. As for C. Kay Scott with his tirade against the mother-in-law, "Blind Mice" will go under my pillow. Announcements are marvelous things. I shall read "Tawi Tawi" by Louise Dodge. Listen to this:

> A story of the rivalry of two brave men for the hand of a beautiful Spaniard, which begins on the Mexican border, shifts to an island in the Philippines and concludes in its original scene.

Again, the description of Oldmeadow's "The Hare" is, what shall I say, beguiling?—"the intimate and appealing story of a young man in love with life, with music, with a woman, and with God." Does it perhaps have an old-fashioned sound? The same quality somehow speaks from the announcement of Coningsby Dawson's new story; "it is the kind of story that plays softly on the heartstrings."

Captain Bone's "The Brassbounder" is to be reissued this spring. Because I have already read "Zell", this will be the first book I shall put on my five-foot shelf for summer. Joseph Conrad is said to have recommended it highly. Bone knows the sea in all its fascination. It is the story of his own apprenticeship in the days of the sailing ship. It must be read. Then there will be "The Seventh Angel" because Alexander Black's "The Great Desire" was such an acute study of New York life; Swinnerton's "Coquette", the story of eighteen months in the life of a dressmaker's assistant; D. H. Lawrence's "The Lost Girl", because they tell me it is better and far more savory than "The Rainbow"; Meade Minnigerode's "The Big Year", because I'm still partial to Yale; another posthumous De Morgan, finished by his wife; Cabell's "Figures of Earth"; Sir Harry Johnston's "The Man Who Did the Right Thing"; Romain Rolland's "Clerambault"; Knut Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil" (even though it does cost five dollars); Harold Waldo's "Stash of the Marsh Country",

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because they tell me it is a promising first novel by a young American. With these, and the two short-story collections (O. Henry and O'Brien respectively), I shall be content. Perhaps I've missed some of the best, but there isn't room for many more on the shelf or in my porch hammock.

Far from each other in content and atmosphere are "Paul Gauguin's Intimate Journals" and "A Friend's Chronicle". Elinor and Van Wyck Brooks have translated the "Journals", while the other book is William Allen White's sketch of Roosevelt. Van Wyck Brooks stands very near the top in the ranks of young and independent American critics, while the sage of Emporia is one of the kindliest of the older school. If we could have no other biographies we would choose these twain. Still, there is Raymond Weaver's "Life of Herman Melville"; and we not only like Mr. Weaver's clarity of style but know that there must be much that is thrilling in the doings of that old chronicler of the South Seas for one who has had access to much hitherto unpublished material. Marie Duclaux knows French literature and she has written vividly of it in the past. Her "Victor Hugo" and Louis Barthou's "A Poet's Loves" doubtless will be read by many lovers of the great Frenchman, many who will not find "The First One Hundred Noted Men and Women of the Screen" important. Of course, you say, vice versa. True.

The essayists of spring seem to be more genial than biting. Possibly Paul Elmer More will quarrel if placed on the same shelf with Hibernian Francis Hackett; and Israel Zangwill offers an entertaining contrast to the dun-robed faint-voiced Tagore; but I'm inclined to think that Holliday and Grossmith, Kilmer and T. S. Eliot, J. Middleton Murry and Arnold Bennett will do very well together or carefully scattered to give a certain "tone" to your new shelves. They will have little about which to dispute. Forgive me my lack of fondness for most essayists. Undoubtedly you'll enjoy all of the above. Personally, I shall read Austin Dobson's "Later Essays".

Bryce's "Modern Democracies", Adams's "The Founding of New England", and McGrath's "The American Background" are three books to read if the determination to be well-informed persists. Charles Seymour's "Wilson and the World War" should be a vivid analysis of the Peace Conference. As for other war books? We are ready, don't you think, for the reactions of the younger men to the war? Some of us are hoping so, for there are great stories of the American army stirring in the minds of former soldiers. Several general books there are this spring, Lansing and General von Bernhardi, General Mitchell of the Air Force, and Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. But the book I want is the diary of an American buck private who saw the war "as was". Would there be a house courageous enough to publish it?

Glancing through advance sheets of Frederic C. Howe's "Revolution and Democracy", I should say that it would be likely to provoke discussion. G. D. H. Cole is a clear thinker and a clear writer. Shall we mention his "Guild Socialism" in the same breath with President Harding's "Our Common Country"? It is not treasonable. Take your pick.

Several titles in poetry and drama stand out boldly, notably: Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Avon's Harvest", "A New Long Poem" by John Masefield, Miss Lowell again, and Eugene

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O'Neill's volume of plays. Alas, did I very nearly forget the much-heralded last drama of G. B. S.? One awaits "Back to Methuselah" with breathless interest. "Legends", Miss Lowell's new volume, the first since she changed publishers, is a series of moving dramatic portraits: Peruvian, Indian, New England dialect, and what not. Some of them I have heard. They are as stirringly dramatic as anything she has ever written, and hold the imagination with swinging rhythms and striking images. Leonora Speyer and David Morton, both already well known for magazine verse, will have first volumes. A unique experiment is Florence Hudson Botsford's "The Folk Songs of Many Peoples", for she has enlisted the aid of a group of American poets to arrange the words.

For travel one would naturally choose first, Roy Chapman Andrews's "Across Mongolian Plains" and Frederick O'Brien's "Mystic Isles of the South Seas". Some folk will tell you that the demand for South Sea literature is soon to ebb. Let them tell. As long as spring is in the air, and visions of waving palms, soft limbs, and coral strands are in the minds of youth, we shall read O'Brien and Melville, MacQuarrie and the rest, and curse the subway train that brings us evilly to a filled desk in the morning. There will be a reprint of McFee's "An Ocean Tramp" and a colorful adventure by R. B. Cunninghame Graham called "Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu"; and for "Americans first", "Utah, the Land of Blossoming Valleys". I'd rather loaf down Long Island any day than read Charles Hanson Towne on this subject; but that is not an insult. Lacking the time to walk, I shall read Mr. Towne's adventures in walking. How in Heaven's name did he avoid being killed by the aristocratic wheel of a limousine or the nonchalant motorcycle of a pursuing "cop"? When I have read, I shall know.

It's summer soon, and we're off for camp. Let's take very especially in our kit bag, Chick Evans on golf, Tilden on tennis, and—Don Marquis, both poems and essays. With these we shall have a happy vacation, if there is a vacation for busy editors. As for you? Well, I generously wish you the summer leisure to read them all.

J. F.

TWO-MEDICINE LAKE

By Mary Carolyn Davies

THE mountains cast themselves within the lake
And lie there still and beautiful; the gray
Dim surface of the water goes its way,
Silently as a mourner, not to wake
Their sleep of death. The clouds who loved them, leave
The heavens that are their house, because they grieve.
For death's old loneliness to make amends
They lay themselves to sleep, beside their friends.

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THE CURIOUS CASE OF KENELM DIGBY

By Christopher Morley

(Concluded from the March issue.)

IN the clarid blue of the evening that blazing gully of light seemed to foam and bubble with preposterous fire. Chop suey restaurants threw out crawling streamers of red and yellow brilliance; against the peacock green of the western sky the queer church at the corner of Seventy-ninth, with the oriental pinnacle and truncated belfry rising above its solid Baptist wings, seemed like the offspring of some reckless marriage of two infatuated architects, one Jewish and one Calvinist. It was a fitting silhouette, I thought, congruent with an evening of such wild humors. Guinea pigs for supper, how original and enlivening! "Are guinea pigs properly kosher?" I asked sarcastically.

Dulcet paid no heed, but holding my arm urged me along the pavement to an animal shop on the western side of Broadway. The window was full of puppies and long-haired cats. All down the aisle of the establishment were tiers of birdcages, covered with curtains while the birds slept. In lucid bowls goldfish pursued their glittering and unprofitable round.

"Those guinea pigs I ordered," said Dulcet to the man, "are they ready?"

"All ready, sir," he said, and took out a cage from under the counter. "Very fine pigs, sir, strong and hearty; they will stand a great deal."

"Yes," I said, with a wild desire to shout with laughter. "But will they stand being eaten? They will find that rather trying, I fancy."

Dulcet tapped his forehead, and the dealer smiled indulgently. My companion took the cage, paid some money, and sped outdoors again. I made no further comment, and in a few minutes we were in Dulcet's apartment.

"You have no kitchenette here, have you?" I protested. "Or do we devour them raw? Oh, I see, you have a camp oven. How ingenious!"

He had put on the table a large tin box. With complete seriousness he now produced a small spirit lamp, over which he fitted a little basket of fine wire mesh. When the flame of the lamp was lit, it played upon the basket, which was supported by legs at just the right height. He now put the unsuspecting guinea pigs into the tin box, which was shaped like a rural free delivery letter-box, with a hinged door opening at one end. He took the spirit lamp with its attached basket and pushed the contraption carefully into the box with the pigs. Then he opened both windows in the room.

"Admirable," I exclaimed. "Like those much advertised cigarettes, they will be toasted. But won't it take a long time?"

"Don't be an ass," he said.

He went to his desk, and took out the tin of Cartesian Mixture he had

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snatched away from me earlier in the evening.

"Your mention of those cigarettes is apt," he said, "for in this case also, the fuel is tobacco. Please go over by the window, and stay there."

I watched, somewhat impressed by the gravity of his manner. From the tin of tobacco he took a small pinch of mixture, and carefully placed it in the mesh basket above the lamp. Reaching into the box, he lit the wick of the lamp with a match, and hastily clapped to the hinged lid. The guinea pigs seemed to be awed by these proceedings, for they remained quiet. Dulcet joined me at the window, and remarked that fresh air was a fine thing.

We waited for about five minutes, while the guinea pig oven stood quietly on the table.

"Well," said Dulcet finally, "we ought to be able to see whether it rhymes or not."

He snatched open the door of the tin box, and skipped away from it in a way that seemed to me perfectly insane. He picked up a pair of tongs from the fireplace, and standing at a distance, lifted out the lamp. The tobacco was smoking strongly in its mesh basket. Holding the lamp away from him with the tongs, he carried it into the bathroom, and I heard him turn on the water. Then, coming back, he inserted the tongs into the tin box, and gingerly withdrew first one guinea pig and then the other. Both were calm as possible, quite dead. Looking over the sill to see that the pavement was clear, he threw the tin box into the street, where it fell with a crash.

"Surely they're not cooked already?" I said.

"I haven't heard from the doctor yet," he said; "but he promised to ring me up this evening. I'm awfully sorry to have delayed your dinner, old man. Meet me at the Lucerne grill room, Seventy-ninth and Amsterdam Avenue, tomorrow evening at seven o'clock, and we'll eat together. You've been a great help to me."

"I hope the doctor is a mental specialist," I said; but he pushed me gently out of the room. "We'll finish our rhyme at dinner tomorrow evening."

I went out into the night, and sorrowfully visited a Hartford Lunch.

The next evening I was at the Lucerne grill promptly. This modest chop house was one of Dulcet's favorite resorts, and I found him already sitting in one of the alcoves studying the menu. He was in fine spirits, and his quizzical blue eyes shone with a healthy lustre.

"Are you armed?" he said, mysteriously.

"What," I cried, "are we going to do some more guinea pigs to death? It was cruel. I have scruples against taking innocent lives. Besides, your experiment proved nothing. Those pigs would have died anyway, shut up in an air-tight box like that."

"Stuff!" he said. "The box was not hermetic. I had left small apertures: there was plenty of oxygen. No, it was not the confinement in the tin box that killed them. After you had gone, the chemist whom I had consulted called me up. My suspicions were sound. Have you ever heard of fumacetic acid?"

This is going to be terrible, I thought to myself, and ordered tenderloin steak, well done, with a double order of hashed brown potatoes.

"Have you ever heard of fumacetic acid?" he repeated relentlessly.

"No," I said nervously.

"It is a deadly and little-known

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drug," he said, "which (so the chemist tells me) possesses the property that when vaporized the slightest whiff of it causes instant death if inhaled into the lungs. The tobacco in that tin had been doctored with it. I sent the chemist the pipe that poor Digby was smoking when he died, and he analyzed what was left in the bowl. There is no doubt whatever. He was poisoned in that way. I tell you, my professional duty as a literary agent requires that in my clients' interest I should sift this thing to the bottom. It may explain some of those earlier deaths that baffled the Authors' League."

"But Mrs. Carboy, surely, did not smoke," I was about to say; but I checked myself in time.

"Dove," I said, "you are superb. But I wish you would tell me how you worked the thing out. What was it that first aroused your suspicions? If it had not been for you, I should never have guessed anything wrong."

"Of course," he said grimly, "it was that murderous placard in the laundry window, and that is to your credit, for you noticed it. That was the one thing that made plain the whole complicated business. Naturally I suspected the tobacco from the first, for (as I told you) it was a mixture that Digby never smoked ordinarily. But when I heard that that eccentric and damnable placard had been put there at the suggestion of the tobacconist next door, and then found that the tobacconist was also a bookseller, I knew the worst. I have spent today in rounding up the threads, and I think I may say without vainglory that the miscreant is in my power."

"But the man standing on one leg?" I said puzzled. "What was he up to, and why did he run?"

Dulcet's face shone with quiet triumph.

"I told you", he said, "to look for a nervous man smoking Cartesian Mixture. That tobacconist, Basswood, smokes Cartesian. It is a very moist, sticky blend, as you know. It can only be shaken out of the pipe, after smoking, by vigorously knocking the bowl on something hard. Very well, and if there is no stone step or something of that sort handy, what will a smoker tap his pipe on? Why, he will stand on one leg and knock it out on the lifted heel of the other. And his running away when you addressed him so whimsically, wasn't that a pretty good sign of nervousness—and also of a guilty and doubtful spirit?"

He finished his tumbler of near-beer that has made Milwaukee infamous, and leaned forward earnestly.

"You know very well," he said, "that that laundryman would never have thought of his grotesque notice, addressed to 'Artists and Authors', if someone hadn't suggested it to him. Obviously he was only a gull. That card was intended as a decoy, to lure Digby away from his room, so that Basswood could leave the poisoned tobacco for him. Basswood had studied Digby's habits, and must have known that that notice about the collars would be sure to catch his eye. Now we had better be going. The police will be at Basswood's shop at eight o'clock."

I could have done with a little strong coffee, but he haled me out of the restaurant, and we walked up Amsterdam Avenue. How little, I reflected, did the passersby, hurrying about their kindly and innocent concerns, suspect our dark and perilous errand.

"The motive, of course", said Dulcet, "was to profit by the increase of value Digby's death would give to his literary work. You will see a proof of

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that in a moment. Here we are. Come on, this is no time to hang back!"

He strode into the brightly lighted shop, and I followed with a clumsy assumption of carelessness. I must confess that my eye wandered in search of suitable cover in case there should be any gun play.

Mr. Basswood was behind his counter, smoking a battered looking briar. One side of the bowl was worn down nearly half an inch (from repeated knocking out on stone steps, I suppose). He was a fat, cross-looking person, with a black jut of moustache and a small vindictive eye.

"A friend told me about your bookshop," said Dulcet. "He said that you sometimes buy books and manuscripts and that sort of thing."

"Yes, sometimes," said Basswood, without enthusiasm.

"I have an unpublished story of Kenelm Digby's," said Dulcet. "It is about forty pages of manuscript. What would you give for that?"

The dealer's eyes brightened. He took his pipe out of his mouth, and knocked it out smartly on his heel, tramping on the glowing cinders. Dulcet looked at me gravely.

"Let me see it," Basswood said eagerly.

"I haven't got it with me. But give me an idea what it would be worth to you."

"If it is genuine, and characteristic of Digby's genius," said Basswood slowly, "I would give you two hundred dollars for it."

"Nonsense!" said Dulcet. "It isn't worth half that. I would not dream of selling it for more than seventy-five."

Basswood looked startled.

"I guess you are not in touch with the market for such things," he said. "There is more interest among collectors in Digby's work than in any other recent writer. Perhaps you don't realize what a difference his sad death has made in the prices of his editions. It is very regrettable, but the death of a writer of that kind always puts a premium on collectors' items, because there will never be any more of them."

"Oh I see," said Dulcet politely. "It is his death that has made the difference, is it?"

"Exactly."

"Well, then I suppose this manuscript *is* worth more than I thought. By the way, I think the title of it will interest you. It is called 'The Mystery of the Soft Collars' and deals with a murder that took place on Eighty-second Street."

I couldn't help admiring the glorious nonchalance with which Dulcet made this remark, gazing the dealer straight in the eye. Basswood's face was a study, and his cheek was pale and greasy. But he too was a man of considerable nerve.

"I don't believe it's genuine," he said. "That doesn't sound to me like Digby's style." His voice shook a little, and he added: "However, if it's as interesting as it sounds, I might pay even more than two hundred for it."

"You rascal!" shouted Dulcet. "Do you think you can buy me off? No, keep your hands above the counter!"

He had whipped out his revolver, and held it at the man's face.

"Look here, Mr. Basswood," he said. "Even the cleverest of us make mistakes. Let me call your attention to one thing. If it was Digby's death that made the difference in the values of his books, how is it that this bill from your printer, for that new catalogue of yours, is dated ten days be-

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fore Digby died? I picked it up in your back room the other day. Doesn't that seem to show that you knew, ten days before the event, that there was going to be a sudden boom in Digbiana? Ten days before he died you were multiplying the prices of the items you had gathered. Now, you dog, can you explain that?"

Basswood shook, but still he clung to his hope.

"I'll give you a thousand for that manuscript," he said.

"Ben," said Dulcet to me, "just slip around the corner and whistle three times. The police are waiting on Eighty-fifth Street."

"There's still one thing that puzzles me," I said to Dulcet late that night as we sat in his room for a final smoke. "I remember that before we discovered that sign in the laundry you said that what we needed to do was to find a rhyme between tobacco and collar buttons. Now what the deuce started you off on collar buttons?"

He smiled patiently.

"When I had to pack up poor old Digby's belongings," he said, "I had the sad task of going through his bureau drawers. You know the devilish little buttons that the manufacturers insist on putting on soft collars. They always come off after one or two washings, and then the collar collapses round your neck into an object of slovenly reproach. Digby was a bachelor, and there was no one to do any mending for him. And when I found that every one of his soft collars had its little button neatly sewed on, I knew there was something wrong. I ask you, wouldn't that have aroused the alarm of the least suspicious?"

Up to the present time, as far as I know, Basswood remains the only bookseller who has ever been electrocuted.

THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

Zell, The Circus, and J. C. Squire

When a man tells me that I MUST read a book, it immediately and mechanically finds itself on my index expurgatorius. One likes to be led more subtly to his reading. In spite of this well-known psychological fact, I am venturing to inaugurate a monthly space in which to recommend a small number of volumes to your attention. They will not be the best books necessarily, nor will they always be the ones about which you are most enthusiastic, for in spite of difficult publishing problems the output from American presses is still strong and at best one can skip through only a modest proportion of the new publications. Delectation alone will be my criterion. Others may offer meat for instruction if they choose.

"Zell" (Knopf) seems not only the best of the spring novels, but the most interesting story of the year. It is a realistic novel by Henry G. Aikman, a young American, whose first novel "The Groper" was published in 1919. Avery Zell was born in a small flat above a drug store in a middle-western city. His father made cigars and drank heavily. Life had miscast his mother hopelessly. There was a divorce. Avery and his sister become

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victims of the resulting difficulties. They go through life continually oppressed by the fact of their own mediocrity. Avery drifts into marriage, finds it stagnation, falls in love with the other woman, but refuses to secure a divorce for the sake of Avery Junior. Perhaps this is commonplace as a plot; but so powerfully has Aikman drawn his characters, so well does he know the trick of economizing both words and incident, so fine is his sense of irony and humor, that Avery Zell enthralls the mind on every page. In his next novel Aikman will probably have ironed out certain little heavinesses of style. "Zell" is not so significant a picture of American life as "Main Street", but it shows a deeper understanding. Aikman succeeds in being sympathetic, even when he is poking the most fun. For some time to come Avery Zell—hopelessly the average American—will probably remain the most vivid young man in native fiction.

The circus has an appeal almost as general in America as chewing gum, and rather more legitimate. Perhaps I'm prejudiced in favor of the sawdust ring because Pat Valdo, the boomerang-throwing clown, dressed me up in bloomers last year and let me cavort for an afternoon in the tinseled roar of Madison Square Garden. Still, I rather think that the lure of peanut call and balloon whistle is so integral a part of the American mind that "The Ways of the Circus" by George Conklin, "Tamer of Lions" (Harper), cannot fail to appeal. He harks back of Barnum and Bailey days to the John O'Brien show, to river circuses on the Mississippi, to the early performances of Dan Rice, that clown-of-clowns. If you are looking for a sophisticated style, do not read this book. It is told, however, directly and vividly. It is packed with anecdote and atmosphere. The lion becomes as familiar as Marantha, the family tabby, and I, for one, had always wondered if it were really true that hyenas eat their own tails. Now I know!

J. C. Squire cannot be accused of narrowness in his literary sympathies. The "Life and Letters" (Doran) is leisurely, penetrating, and quietly amusing. These essays by the editor of "The London Mercury" are some of them reviews, some of them sketches. They range from a humorous discussion of the split infinitive to notes on Shakespeariana. They include appreciations of such widely dissimilar authors as staid Pope and flaming Sax Rohmer, and this keen essayist's ideas of life and literature are usually stimulating and provocative. For a man of literary tastes, this seems an excellent volume to put on the table in front of the fire—an essay for odd moments in an easy chair.

J. F.

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A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

ON GEORGE JEAN NATHAN—AND PERHAPS SOME OTHER CRITICS?

By Arnold Daly

YOU ask me to review Nathan's book, "The Theatre, The Drama, The Girls". Not an easy task, really. To say that it is well written is banal—that is to be expected. It is quite clear that he knows the theatre so much better than his confrères that it isn't even a race. I have always denied that he was a clever critic, but frankly, that was due to cowardice; I always feared that if I praised him I would be accused of returning the compliment. He somehow seems to think that I am a good actor, and that must confound the erudite, distinguished critic on the "Evening Post" at least. That dear person has spent his life wondering what I am doing on the stage at all, at all.

Strangely enough, it is not Nathan's ability, brilliancy, or knowledge that impresses one most—it is his courage. And this is absurd, and should not be. But then, Henry Irving is not remembered, even by actors, because of his great ability. No, the first thought invariably is some anecdote concerning his giving ten pounds to a needy pro, an act a drunken sailor could accomplish. When Nathan rips into a manager's production he is accused of hate, envy, ignorance, aforethought, etc., etc. Whereas he is the great friend of the theatre. I assured Mr. Belasco, about four years ago, that both Nathan and Sherwin were his friends, despite their reviews of his work: they expected *great things* of him. It's a great compliment to expect big things of a man.

Only love for the thing could make a man be willing to suffer the terrible boredom which constant playgoing must produce, wading constantly through mediocrity in the dogged search for the jewel. This is all very well for the man who can do no better, but Nathan could chuck his job as critic and make a living tomorrow as a humorous writer. Let him who doubts this bear with the somewhat academic tone throughout his book (the note "I know this and I'm telling you")—the last two chapters will make him roar. Should Nathan, by any chance, read over the last ninety pages, he would immediately fire himself as critic, go to Eaves the costumer for the cap and bells, and set up as a humorist.

It's in his knowledge of the French, German, and English stage, as well as our own, that the man must be admired; that knowledge could only be gained on his knees, through love for the thing. When he says that acting isn't an art, of course he is talking arrant rot—who could doubt it, after witnessing a performance by the great Duse? When he says that actors are over-praised, he is quite right. Lester Wallack always asked the newspapers not to mention his juvenile men—praise turned their heads. On the other hand, needless damning is not good either. Years ago, I told Jim Metcalfe when he wrote for "Life", that if he could only say "Bravo" with half the enthusiasm with which he wrote "Damn it", he would be a useful, constructive critic. Nowadays, our managers only want caramel

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criticism. It's not good for the theatre; the moment the public ceases to take criticism seriously the theatre has lost one of its great assets.

In the February number of "The Smart Set" Nathan takes the jellied, gentle scribe of the New York "Times" to task for his Duchess-like outpourings anent the invasion from the East Side and other mediocrities. But the over-enthusiastic splash of adjectives indulged in by the Falstaffian gentleman referred to, seems to my mind not his most serious fault. Indeed, if any habit of his, however objectionable socially, could give him any knowledge of the theatre, I for one would condone it. On September 26 last, in two columns of complacent review, the learned critic of the "Times" tells us that in recent years no actor or actress has done anything for the American stage except Margaret Anglin, John Barrymore, and Walter Hampden. Now then, I take second place to no man in my admiration for Miss Anglin and her achievements. Her pluck, her money, and ability have accomplished much—bless her. Mr. Barrymore has great ability and has had some luck. I had the honor of being the first to tell him that he would be a serious actor. He laughed at me then; he did not know how far one hundred per cent earnestness will carry a man who has only to develop a natural talent. But has Jack ever risked one penny in the American theatre?—ask him. Mr. Hampden, less talented by far than Jack—has he? Whereas, every newsboy knows that what few pennies the writer ever received from the theatre he has put back. This week, the final check in payment for a loan to keep "The Master" going (when fate stopped the game, with that little trick at Roosevelt) was dispatched. Shaw, the One Act Theatre, Paul Hervieu, also were produced at my expense. What does the gentleman mean by doing something "for the theatre"? Where was he then—sharpening pencils in his freshman year? He, like the brilliant critic on the "Tribune", could see nothing in my performance in "The Tavern" except that I was badly dressed, couldn't sing, couldn't act, and couldn't dance. The "Tribune" gentleman also resents my fat—yet the Biltmore bath scales register a scant one hundred and sixty-seven. Lucien Guitry, the leading actor of France, tips the scales at about two fifty. Even so, not in twenty-five years has a Parisian critic referred to his size; they confine their criticism to his acting. I mentioned the subject to another critic, who is unprejudiced, and I think fair, remarking that I thought the song and dance team on the "Times" and "Tribune" guilty of spleen. He answered, "No, ignorance"; and added, "Are they weighing acting nowadays?" Duse once wrote a letter congratulating me on a performance, and thank God the public, judging from the business, seems to think there is hope; and the dancing pleased George Cohan—and he's a judge. As to the singing, we admit Caruso needn't worry.

But to return to George Jean, the day has passed, Monsieur, when the American stage need blush. Today, it runs first. London is Newark, New Jersey, and Paris, Elizabeth. That is an honest opinion, after spending six months in London and a year in Paris. London lives on memories, and Paris on mediocrity. One thing we can get from abroad—the fundamental depths of life which the drama of the Austrian and German dramatists still betrays, whereas our boys, with the exception of Eugene O'Neill, still pother about, skirting the superficialities of

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life in play making. Nathan is right about a number of things in this book —you should read it—highly diverting. He is right about Ziegfeld—he is a genius; but then, I told Sherwin that years ago. He must have told Nathan. At the other girl shows one gets a nausea of knees, whereas at a Ziegfeld show one would be pleased to meet every woman on the stage. The reason is simple; there is a note of innocence, something unspoiled, a breath of fresh flowers—really. Also, Nathan is right about women. It's absurd to believe that Mencken was serious when he said he thought them cleverer than men. Methinks he was "kidding" Nathan. They are more cunning; ah, yes. Mentally, man is a logician—woman a musician.

The Theatre, The Drama, The Girls. By George Jean Nathan. Alfred A. Knopf.

MR. BALFOUR EXPLAINED

By David Jayne Hill

THIS well-written and very interesting book is not so much a biography, in the ordinary sense of the word, as a study of British politics during the last fifty years, with Mr. Balfour represented in a series of *tableaux vivants* in the rôle of a member of the government or of the opposition, in accordance with the state of British party control at the time.

This method of treatment is well adapted to the presentation of a life like that of Mr. Balfour, whose entire career has been closely associated with the party vicissitudes of Great Britain. As a background for the series of exhibits, in which each chapter represents a new aggregation of personages, the author has sketched an imaginary outline of what might be designated "the complete statesman", intended to serve as a standard of measurement by which the qualities of Mr. Balfour's statesmanship are judged. "When perception, energy, and judgment are present in the same individual in the highest degree and in perfect blending," writes Mr. Raymond, "he becomes in any case a considerable, and if circumstances favour, an epoch-making statesman: such men were Richelieu, Cavour, and (in somewhat coarser kind) Bismarck."

Mr. Balfour is not placed by Mr. Raymond in this epoch-making class, yet beyond dispute he belongs to the category of "a considerable statesman". In the twenty-three untitled chapters which compose this book the attributes and achievements of the subject of it are measured upon the scale outlined in the background for this purpose, with the result that the author's estimate of Mr. Balfour's proportions as a statesman is registered in the following somewhat paradoxical conclusion:

> He has always been credited with an indefinable superiority over his performances. They have been notable; but it is vaguely felt that the man is more notable still; in the midst of his greatest failures he was more interesting than other men in their most triumphant success. With others the "might-have-been" is a reproach; with men like Mr. Balfour it is a tribute: they please in disappointing.

This paradox is rendered intelligible if one considers the reasons for expecting great things of Mr. Balfour. Although his father's family was not an ancient one, his grandfather had acquired an ample fortune in India and his mother, Lady Blanche Gascoigne-Cecil, was the daughter of the second Marquis of Salisbury and sister of that Lord Robert Cecil who was later to become the Victorian Burleigh. Born on July 25, 1848, on the estate at Whittinghame, built with the gold his

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grandfather had brought from India, Arthur James Balfour, educated at Eton and at Trinity College, Cambridge, a member of Parliament at twenty-six from the Borough of Hertford, then almost entirely owned by the Cecil family, possessed every advantage and awakened every expectation that could stimulate an aspirant for political honors in Great Britain.

"At Whittinghame", says his biographer, "he moved amid a deference almost amounting to worship." To his family pride "he added a curious intellectual arrogance which is visible in his earliest speeches and is never quite absent from his more mature utterances. A profound conviction that what is popular must be vulgar seems to have been his from a very tender age."

Here was the promise of all that extreme conservatism could desire, but it was cast upon a period of revolution in English life which rendered the efforts of Mr. Balfour chiefly those of resistance to an ever flowing stream of change. His parliamentary leadership was destined to take on the character of industriously building dams to arrest the stream which was constantly overflowing them.

In domestic politics Mr. Balfour's name is associated with no great and permanent victory. All the great problems of his time have been solved without him, and in spite of him; or, like the Irish question, in which he interested himself deeply on a theory of rewards for quiescence and penalties for disturbance, are still unsolved.

If there is anything permanently great in Mr. Balfour's achievements it is, apparently, in the realm of foreign policy. At heart an Imperialist, he has always stood, and still stands, for British domination wherever it is possible without too much risk. In this he represents the aspirations of Disraeli, without his boldness in playing the game and taking the chances.

The deepest impression made upon Mr. Balfour by any single political personality was doubtless that made by his uncle, Lord Salisbury. In 1878 he accompanied his uncle to the Berlin Congress as his private secretary; and up to 1902, when he himself became Premier, he was an advocate of the Salisbury policies in foreign affairs. In this system the greed of Russia and the restlessness of France were considered the two real dangers to British imperial progress, and a "sleeping partnership" with Prussia was the most trusted safeguard. Bismarck had declared that there could be no quarrel between the whale and the elephant, and this was true so long as the elephant did not cultivate aquatic habits. According to Mr. Raymond:

> It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the whole character of British life for nearly forty years was determined by faith in the Prussian military tradition and confidence that there could be no antagonism between Prussian ambitions and our own.... British patriots during the greater part of the nineteenth century were acutely conscious of every word and deed of French and Russian statesmen, but watched with indifference or approval the consolidation of the great Germanic power.

The "place in the sun" which Germany demanded was willingly accorded by Lord Salisbury and also by Mr. Balfour during the latter's premiership. Lord Lansdowne at the Foreign Office was "merely the agent"; the "directing mind" was the Prime Minister. But the "place in the sun" which Great Britain was disposed to grant to Germany did not permit of any rivalry on the sea, and when Germany began her vigorous naval policy Great Britain, in self-defense, developed the Triple Entente with France and Russia. This policy was followed with "substantial con-

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tinuity" when Mr. Balfour's leadership was superseded by a Liberal ministry, and in the conviction that no party difference must divide the country when British interests were at stake he continued to support it under Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith.

It is this loyalty to the interests of Great Britain in the foreign field rather than any success in party leadership, that will permanently secure to Mr. Balfour a highly honored place in British appreciation. When the war broke out, he spoke firmly for "unbroken unity", and marred its completeness only by his opposition to the Home Rule Bill, on which he remained "the 'Everlasting Nay' incarnate". As a member of the Committee of Imperial Defense and First Lord of the Admiralty he approved the complete blockade of Germany as a necessary measure of retaliation for the "sink at sight" policy of the enemy, but with an acute sense of the peril incurred by imposing loss and inconvenience on the whole neutral world. If Great Britain's methods aroused general resentment by the infringements of neutral rights, he was solicitous that they should at least appeal to reason as offenses for which there would be future compensation, while for the offenses of Germany it was evident there would and could be none.

It was not, however, as an administrator of war that Mr. Balfour served his country most effectively. His proper rôle was diplomacy, which was looked upon as a secondary function when he was removed from the Admiralty and, as Foreign Secretary in place of Viscount Grey, became "the subordinate of every member of that constitutional curiosity the 'War Cabinet' ".

It was his mission to America in 1917 that best reveals the versatility and the character of Mr. Balfour. Whatever else may be said of that mission, it is beyond dispute that he displayed in it great astuteness in proclaiming that he "had come to discuss practical details of a limited partnership, and not any grandiose scheme for an alliance". Instead of following the enthusiasts who wanted him to "awaken America", he spoke of "the memorable doings of a benevolent neutrality", and found everything American admirable. "The people of the Middle West", writes Mr. Raymond, "were soon convinced that he was a 'sincere democrat', a fact which, while it reflects no little credit on Mr. Balfour the diplomat, does, perhaps, show how dangerous it is to judge a Briton from his words and conduct outside of his own country." "When he spoke of the war, it was its 'democratic' character that he emphasized." Of secret treaties he had nothing to say. The "political moderation" of the English-speaking races promised well, he said, for the restoration of civilization.

On his return, Mr. Balfour was besieged for reforms in the Foreign Office, but he insisted that the demands were groundless. Asked to define the war aims of the Allies, he instanced the independence of Poland and the rescue of Armenia. Downing Street was radiant with benevolence. When the Russian Revolution divulged the secret treaties, and these were flung at him by the pacifists, "he declared he really could not see his way to having our foreign policy 'proclaimed to the sound of the trumpet at Charing Cross'; but on the other hand, the aims of the Allies were known to be honorable, so why insist on highly technical details?" "I have no secrets from President Wilson," he said. "Every thought I have of the war, or of the diplomacy connected with the

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war, is as open to him as to any other human being." "This was doubtless true", adds Mr. Raymond, "but it invited the retort that in the English statesman's mind were recesses to which neither the President nor any other mortal man had ever penetrated."

Of the Paris Conference and Mr. Balfour's part in it, his biographer has little to say.

> The surface facts are that in all the great matters Mr. Lloyd George took not only the leading but the only rôle; while that part of the peace which concerned the League of Nations was made a sideshow and left to Mr. Balfour's kinsman and former subordinate, Lord Robert Cecil.

Mr. Balfour's participation in the drama may, nevertheless, be conjectured. Such powers as he possesses were certainly not unused by men of less experience. The obscurity in which he chose to remain during the greater part of the conference may be understood by a remark he once made: "I am more or less happy when being praised; not very uncomfortable when being abused, but I have moments of uneasiness when I am being explained."

There was no demand on Mr. Balfour when in the United States to explain his mission. He said what he thought necessary to secure the loans and the other aid Great Britain desired. Why should he say more? President Wilson had no reason to suppose that this benevolent-appearing gentleman was a sophisticated person, much less that everything in the Pacific Ocean in which the United States had any particular interest had been already divided between Great Britain and her ally, Japan, even down to the little island of Yap, where the American cable landed! And when later at Paris this fact was discovered, could he demand that solemn treaties should be regarded as mere "scraps of paper"? Was it not for the sanctity of treaties that the Allies were fighting?

It is not necessary to pass judgment on this subject, but one is reminded of Winston Churchill's comment, that the difference between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith is "that Arthur is wicked and moral, Asquith is good and immoral".

A Life of Arthur James Balfour. By E. T. Raymond. Little, Brown and Co.

MIRRORS OF THE RENAISSANCE

By Marguerite Wilkinson

ARCHITECTURE, we have been told, is "frozen music". If it be permissible to describe one art in terms of another, in this way, poetry is sometimes architecture made fluid again. Such is the poetry of William Rose Benét. He is a builder. He goes to history as to a quarry for his materials and, having secured them, sets block on block with pains until the walls of his thought stand firm before him, until his strongest rhythms have the certitude of an arch. He is one of the most keenly intellectual poets now writing in America. Some time ago he said:

> A poet should swallow the encyclopædia, and then after that, the dictionary. A poet should know history inside and out and should take as much interest in the days of Nebuchadnezzar as in the days of Pierpont Morgan.

Mr. Benét has swallowed more than the encyclopædia and the dictionary. He has devoured many books and, obviously, he still hungers. His avidity prompts the salutation in the words of Kipling, "Full gorge and a deep sleep to thee, O Rann, thou noblest of kites!" His interest in the days of Nebuchadnezzar seems to have equaled,

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if it has not exceeded, his interest in the days of Pierpont Morgan. But when he wrote "Moons of Grandeur" he was interested chiefly in the Renaissance.

The longest and most important poems in this latest book are interpretations of powerful personalities of the Italian Renaissance, studies of moods and moments in the lives of Leonardo, Michelangelo, Gaspara Stampa, Caterina Sforza, Cæsar Borgia, Michelotto, Captain of the Guard, Lodovico Sforza, commonly called Il Moro, and others. Mr. Benét has seen these men and women and their lives in relation to their times. He has set them against the background of wanton bloodshed and daring beauty, of old lusts and the new learning, of deadly poisons and passionate exaltations, that belonged to the period in which they lived.

The book begins with a stately poem in which Gaspara Stampa, "the Sappho of our time, the great Gaspara", sings her hopeless love for Collalto, who has gone to France and put her out of his mind. The rhythm has both grace and dignity, and in one or two stanzas Mr. Benét shows an unusual knowledge of the natural ways of a woman's speech in time of sorrow. Such lines as these are both naive and tragic:

For France is far, so far, my dearest lord,
Beyond the Alps, so far, men say,
One little word, even one little word
Loses its way.
Is it not piteous then to die, to live
In death, to gasp unheard
In thirst unslaked for what one word could give,
One little word?

But better than this first poem is the swift and vivid ballad that follows it and describes the taking of Forli in Romagna by Cæsar Borgia. It has as much vitality as the old ballad of "Edom O'Gordon" with a more tragic intensity due, I think, to the characterization of Caterina Sforza, a "perilous matron, stony-pale", who was defending the town.

The "Legend of Michelotto" which follows is a praiseworthy melodrama in which conscience and the subconscious mind take their vengeance on the Captain of the Guard, "last of Cæsar Borgia's men", for the many murders committed at the behest of his master. The shades of Astorre Manfredi, the young, vanquished Lord of Faenza, of Caracciolo's bride, of captains and bishops and nuns, haunt his "lousy pallet". Finally his master himself appears, saying:

"Is it well
To summon weary shadows out of Hell?"

The thing is lurid, but less lurid by far than the deeds of those days. In the description of them melodrama and realism may go hand in hand.

"There Lived A Lady In Milan" shows what a graceful suitor the great Leonardo could be. "Bourbon's Love" is less interesting because too much historical explanation precedes the feeling and action of the poem. "Renegade" rings steadily in the ear and reminds one of Alfred Noyes. Several poems of ancient Egyptian life follow, of which the most meaningful is "The Sun Gazer". Then Mr. Benét steps forward in time again to the Norman Conquest and offers a stirring ballad of Taillefer, a young Norman knight who angered the Conqueror by being first to land on English soil at Pevensey, and for that reason was made to lead the vanguard against the Saxons. At the end of the book are a number of sonnets of which the most vigorously personal may be "The Foil", beginning

Thank God for all the wrath of hypocrites
That burnishes the blade of Truth so bright!

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Thank God indeed for malice, envy, spite,
Fated to crown and throne their opposites!

The personal and subjective lyrics are few in this book, however, and most of the poems are built up of ashlars hewn from history.

How has the work of building been done? For the most part, exceedingly well. His designs are good and suited to the materials with which he works. He has a sense of color,—"Green with the juicy greenness of a leek", "grape-colored water", "cherry embers", and

The seven golden cities miraged the golden sand,
But serpents crowned fire-ringed them round, black angels held that land.
Still Coronado's canyon yawns a chasm of awe and dread
Wherein pulse wizard blues of noon and Hell-pits crumbling red.

For the sake of this color we may forgive him the old phrase "red as blood".

Most of Mr. Benét's rhythms are vigorous and so well suited to the substance of his work that it seems ungrateful to say a word against them. Sometimes, however, one wishes that his intellect would be a little less vigilant, for a slight relaxation of the rhythm would give it greater emotional accuracy and make it more fluent, moving, and memorable. He is very careful to have the correct number of syllables for the line, but not quite careful enough, always, of the quality of the syllables. Sometimes final consonants get in the way. In "Renegade" we find the line

On war's way—god Mars' way.

The final *d* of the word *god* would not be troublesome before the word *Mars* in a slow rhythm. But it trips the tongue here. Similarly, in "The Ballad of Taillefer", the final *th's* coming before the *cl* of *clearer* seems to me to balk the movement in the wrong place in the line

Voice of Youth's clearer vision.

But for most readers, these are small matters.

Perhaps no single ballad in this book is so thrilling as "The Horse Thief", a narrative of the land of the cowboy written some time ago; and no single lyric equals Mr. Benét's masterpiece "The Falconer of God", a radiant and invincible poem unequaled among religious lyrics by modern Americans. But, leaving these two poems out of the reckoning, it may be said that "Moons of Grandeur" is Mr. Benét's most interesting book. There is a brightness and soundness about it that makes one certain that he has not stopped growing and that he is not ready to stop. For him there is

Something unbuilded to be builded still.

Moons of Grandeur. By William Rose Benét. George H. Doran Company.

A NOVEL OF HUMAN ILLUSION

By Edwin Björkman

THE latest and greatest work of Jacob Wassermann's was written while the world struggle still seemed undecided, although to a sensitive soul like that of Wassermann the inevitable end already must have been foreshadowed. On reading it, future generations may recall Goethe's audacious declaration that the completion of his "Faust" was more important to humanity than the winning or losing of the battle of Jena.

The book was an escape from the deepening gloom of the world surrounding its writer. It is written as if there were no war, but every page is fraught with endless, all-embracing pity for the things in all men that made the war possible. It became an escape not by picturing an imaginary

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existence void of the horrors and the sorrows resting so heavily on mankind while the story of Christian Wahnschaffe took shape, but by showing how they sprang inevitably from the most deeply rooted delusions of that all too real world which still refused to believe in the possibility of the impending catastrophe.

At first glance, the title chosen for the English version seems ill-fitting and deceptive, and one is inclined to resent it, for a piece of great literature is like a refuge where exhausted souls may renew themselves, a title like a gateway that attracts or repels. But when the book is finished, the validity of the title is seen, even though it still fail to give entire satisfaction. The illusion that keeps the world what it remains today in spite of its recent chastisement, is that of an individual self capable of fulfilling its nature regardless of what that fulfilment means to other parts of the greater self of which it forms an infinitesimal fraction.

The prevalence and the futility of this illusion is illustrated by the detailed life stories of many men and women, each drawn as if it had been part and parcel of the writer's personal experience. All of them, however, have their main significance as means of illuminating the inner growth of a single man, Christian Wahnschaffe, who is the central figure of the book and the chief embodiment of its purpose. In that man the general illusion has been made so strong by circumstances of birth and environment that his very being seems unthinkable without it. And this is the man who, once a glimmer of doubt has entered his soul, cannot be stopped by any consequence until he has mastered the truth in its utmost bitterness and its most far-reaching fatality.

To many readers the figure of Christian Wahnschaffe will suggest that of Christ. The name itself carries the suggestion, and there are pages in the book that bring it to the verge of an open admission. Yet the comparison halts at too many points, while another gradually assumes a shape that at last becomes undeniable in its definiteness. Whatever the author's conscious intention may have been, the figure of Christian Wahnschaffe is that of the young Gautama pursuing in ultra-modern surroundings the thorny path of disillusionment that leads to the enlightenment of the Buddha.

The end is unmistakably oriental, too. It is not incompatible with the inner spirit of Christianity when the latter is freed from its traditional coating of dogma, but the difference cannot be denied. The self-surrender in which Christian finally finds the only solution of life's grotesque perplexities is deeper than any one that could be imagined by a religion which, like the Christian, has had a Greek strain woven into its texture.

Perhaps the highest tribute payable to Wassermann's art is an admission of the convincing quality of such a character as Christian. Similar figures are not rare in modern literature. They have all fallen short of true humanity, and too often they have been presented to us with traits that could only be called pathological. Occasionally the creator of Christian has erred by over-statements endangering the versimilitude of his character, but in spite of these rare lapses Christian is human from the first and remains so to the last, while at the same time one is continuously impressed by the essential wholesomeness of his entire being. The story of Christian is one of awakening, not of convalescence.

The structure of the story as a whole is kaleidoscopic, shifting abruptly

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from one scene to another, from one set of actors to another, seemingly unrelated, group. The effect is startling at times, but never confusing, and in the end, if not before, one discovers that no thread, no strand, could be spared without a weakening of the total impression. The opening gives no clue to the end, and many chapters pass by before the reader even suspects which figure is to carry the emphasis of the story. Every figure is a piece of lifelike portraiture, rich in those minute details that we observe only in members of our most intimate set.

The world in which they move, whether it be high or low, rich or poor, conventional or placed above or below conventions, is rendered strangely familiar too, like streets passed daily on our way to and from work. The life of that world is like a life really lived—full of brave things and foul, of nobility and sordidness, of soul-compelling beauty and repelling vileness. And Mr. Wassermann gives it all as he has found it—the hopelessly commonplace mixed with the strikingly exceptional. His presentation of every detail is marked by a directness that will undoubtedly be questioned here, but his frankness is coupled with artistic restraint, and back of it all lies an earnest conviction that nothing but a merciless telling of the truth can cure the evils of which crime and misery and ugliness are merely symptoms.

Still more significant, however, is the subtle understanding of life's secretive ways and mysterious motives that illumines passage after passage, making you feel that you must return to ponder them at ease as soon as the thread of the story has been followed to the point where it breaks with a little ironical laugh before it ends in a parable of characteristic oriental origin.

This may seem the picture of a flawless work. "The World's Illusion" is quite human, however, and there is no intention here to represent it otherwise. But the shortcomings of which it may be held guilty are of such secondary importance when one considers the value and the rich charm of the work as a whole, that it would be a waste of space to dwell on them. The book is big in every respect—one of the biggest produced by our own day—and the skill of the translator has given us its original spirit unimpaired.

The World's Illusion. By Jacob Wassermann. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

PLAYS AND SO FORTH

By Walter Prichard Eaton

WHEN a dramatic reviewer whose life has been more or less spent in the actual playhouse sits down with a pile of new books before him, either printed plays or books about the theatre, his instinct takes him at once to the plays which are potent in production—which, in short, are practical dramas. Naturally in any pile of new books which contained the text of Barrie's "A Kiss for Cinderella", that volume would be opened first: not that one has forgotten in the least what is in it potentially, but to see how much of the drama's charm can be imprisoned in the feeble black types. Strange, that so excellent a novelist as Barrie was should be so supremely a playwright also, so that even his own unique "stage directions" prepared for the text (in themselves the beginnings of novels, the evokers of moods) are quite unequal to the task of suggesting one quarter of the delight a drama of his contains. Unique as is the

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Barrie flavor, in novel or play, there is yet a method in his dramatic writing which belongs to many of the most successful dramatists; he quite definitely aims to hold the attention and arouse the emotions by an appeal to the eye, by pantomime, by putting before us familiar objects in odd or significant light, in short, by transferring to the stage the results of his own twinkling and unresting observation of people and things. "A Kiss for Cinderella" is delightful reading, but because Barrie is so thoroughly at home in the theatre, so completely the artist not with words but with actors, properties, lights, "situations", when he abandons the novel for the stage, it is pale enough beside the acted version. As a dramatic text-book, however, it is invaluable.

In startling contrast is a blank verse tragedy called "Caius Gracchus" by "Odin Gregory", whoever he may be, a drama which Theodore Dreiser, in a curiously uninformed introduction, says would be a great success on the stage. Well, he is entitled to his guess. Anybody who could more than guess would command a princely salary as a play reader. But we venture to hint that such a prophecy about a Roman drama in uninspired blank verse is dangerous business. Mr. Dreiser plunges bravely in, however, with the further assertion that "Odin Gregory" has made "one of the really notable contributions to English literature of the last three centuries". Well, well! this is at least interesting, if true—almost as interesting as Mr. Dreiser's statement that no English dramas, except those written by Shakespeare and Sheridan, have survived the test of a century. (And this just as the revival of "The Beggar's Opera" has entered its second year in London, and has been produced in New York.) But never mind that, or the real reasons why we don't see our classics on the stage (not even Sheridan). Odin Gregory has *not* made a contribution to our literature, this work aiming to be a play, unless it is effective in the theatre. After it is produced, we can judge of that, but not before. Even the Olympian Mr. Dreiser is talking nonsense when he makes such an assertion. On the evidence of the text, the drama shows us a great Roman democrat overthrown by the forces of privilege and reaction; the matter has its undoubted modernity, but the manner is archaic, and neither the emotional qualities of the story nor the quality of the poetry seem distinguished enough to break through this crust of convention. Far better for us Shaw's manner in "Cæsar and Cleopatra". As a critic, we think Mr. Dreiser an excellent realistic novelist.

The editor has also sent, in this pile of books, one for which we committed an introduction—three plays by James Forbes, "The Famous Mrs. Fair", "The Show Shop", and "The Chorus Lady". This book is chiefly to be commended because it enables that small but growing number of theatregoers who take a critical, or technical, interest in the playhouse, to study at leisure three plays by a popular native dramatist, two of which have been enormously successful in the accepted sense of attracting the public. The least successful of the three, "The Show Shop", is, we think, the best play. Its subject-matter, however—stage life behind the scenes—was too sophisticated for audiences outside of New York. But what a kindly yet pointed satire it is, how full of wit and observation, how neatly constructed, how technically expert! We need not apologize too much for our native

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drama when we can show a work like this.

Four one-act plays by John Drinkwater have been collected in a volume called "Pawns". They have all been produced in England, but none of them, unless it is "X = O: A Night of the Trojan War", quite escapes from the poetry of the printed poem into the poetry of the spoken word and the moving drama. Drinkwater's "Lincoln" may yet turn out to be one of those happy accidents that sometimes befall a writer who is not truly born to the theatre.

That Arthur Symons was born to the theatre, his most ardent admirer could hardly maintain. "Cesare Borgia", the title-play in his latest volume, is difficult even to read. "Iseult of Brittany" is a mere fragment, a whiff of faint music, a sketch seen through ancient glass. Only "The Toy Cart", adapted from an Indian source, could be acted with hope of success. This is a naive little drama in five acts, written in prose, and at least shows the fundamental value of plot and suspense. It also makes you wonder why literary artists like Symons cannot occasionally come out of their ivory towers long enough to realize that the dramatic fundamentals must be in every work which assumes the high title of drama, or else it is a vain thing, and worth nobody's time.

Nobody has insisted, in season and out, more energetically for recognition of the fundamentals of drama than Clayton Hamilton, formerly a critic, now a producer of motion pictures. Mr. Hamilton's latest book, "Seen on the Stage", records his impressions and judgments of the more important productions made in New York during the past few seasons; and in recording his impressions he tells us much about those things which are essential to successful play making. But we do wish he were sometimes less portentous about it. When we read Mr. Hamilton, we too often feel as if we ought to be taking notes, preparatory to a mid-year exam. It is characteristic that when he writes of Harry Lauder, he begins with a quotation from Emerson, and when he writes of Drinkwater's "Lincoln", he begins with a homily on hero worship which betrays him into such mirth-provoking nonsense as this:

> The almost tragic need for heroes accounts for the abiding popularity of such otherwise inconsequential games as baseball, football, and boxing. Prize-fighting justifies itself when it permits a world of men and boys to worship such a hero as Georges Carpentier.... Most of us are lowly people, and lead lowly lives; and, in order to "carry on", we need the spiritual sustenance of lifting our hearts up to the hills, whence cometh our strength.

We fear Mr. Hamilton has betrayed himself into a form of sentimental balderdash he would severely condemn in G. M. Cohan. Besides, he has misquoted his Scripture. But Mr. Hamilton, in spite of the formality of his method, the sometimes platitudinous homily preceding each specific review —a flourish of rhetorical trumpets and enter, Harry Lauder!—is a critic of taste and judgment and sympathy. His fault is that he takes his job rather more seriously than the occasion usually warrants. It is a fault that might well be more common, for the good of the craft. We are sorry he has gone into the movies. We cannot imagine what a serious critic can do in the movies, except lose his reason.

A Kiss for Cinderella. By J. M. Barrie. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Caius Gracchus. By Odin Gregory. Boni and Liveright.
The Famous Mrs. Fair and Other Plays. By James Forbes. George H. Doran Company.
Pawns. By John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Cesare Borgia. By Arthur Symons. Brentano's.
Seen on the Stage. By Clayton Hamilton. Henry Holt and Co.

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THE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR'S CORNER

WELL, then, whom *would* you say?" she asked.

We had been discussing, this young woman and I, Mr. Chesterton's long delayed visit to the United States. As she was very beautiful I would have discussed anything with her. As she was also very intelligent, we happened to discuss this. And I had been saying (I am afraid at some length) that Edwin Markham, who was the gentleman chosen (presumably by the lecture management) to do this, did not seem to me to be at all in the picture as the one to "introduce" Mr. Chesterton at his first public appearance in America.

Dr. George W. Cabot had introduced Mr. Chesterton in Boston. And in New York again he had been presented to his audience by Hamlin Garland (who did it very well, remarked the lady) and by Gelett Burgess. Now Dr. Cabot is, so to say, quite a different story from Mr. Markham; one does not confuse Mr. Garland with Dr. Cabot; and Mr. Burgess is hardly a replica of Mr. Garland. I should not fail, I think, in my appreciation of the abilities of any one of these highly talented men. I savored the position and the personality of each, and again I firmly and sadly shook my head. No one of them (to my mind) filled this particular bill, so to put it.

Well, what was needed was, of course, a humorist. I thought of George Ade and of Finley Peter Dunne. But neither of them seems to be around much any more. And they were not quite right, either. More of a literary touch was required. I thought of Francis Hackett. Way off, of course, from Mr. Chesterton in spiritual philosophy, and not nearly enough human and ruddy. I thought of H. L. Mencken. But the lady, who did not seem to fancy my friend Mr. Mencken, declared that Mr. Chesterton would probably destroy him. Joyce Kilmer certainly would have been an affinity in mind, still.... Don Marquis occurred to me, but....

"What would you think of Booth Tarkington, or Joseph Hergesheimer?" inquired the lady.

"Different sort of birds altogether."

"James Huneker?" she suggested.

An interesting idea, I thought. Mr. Huneker was a man of congenial presence. More, he was what was awfully needed, a "figure". I thought of William Marion Reedy. He was right in so far as he was in a measure an American institution.

"What about Amy Lowell?" asked the lady. She smiled. But it seemed to me that Miss Lowell would not be an unhappy choice at all for the rôle.

The idea of contrasting physical presence put into our heads the amusing notion of Gerald Stanley Lee.

A couple of very bad bets, I said, would be William Lyon Phelps and Dr. Henry van Dyke.

William Dean Howells. Good, too. And yet no one we could think of was wholly satisfactory. A replica of Chesterton in mind and stature was not what we wanted. But a humorist, a philosopher, a figure, a national institution, a personality as representative of America as G. K. C. is of England.

"Mark Twain, of course," said the lady, "would have been ideal."

He would. *R. C. H.*

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BRIEF REVIEWS OF NEW NOVELS

THE PASSIONATE SPECTATOR, by Jane Burr (Seltzer).

"Is Marriage a Success?" asks the advertisement. The book, judged by the author's purpose, is. On the other hand, marriage is not, especially when unvirtuous people are mixed up in it. Miss Burr has given us an unashamed heroine who talks straight from the shoulder and sometimes out of her heart about her boresome married life, her very daring escapades, and how her eyes were opened; result—a sentimentally sensational novel. The heroine, a Chicago woman whose three children are taken away by infantile paralysis, has nothing in the world to do, so she studies successively music with an amorous teacher and stenography in a business school, and then runs off from her husband to New York where she becomes a physician's secretary with other lurid subsequences. The book is heralded here as a success in England; aside from the sex interest this may be attributed to the glamor of American geography. Yellow-journal stuff.

THE HAPPY HIGHWAYS, by Storm Jameson (Century).

A Shavian wit, an irony almost Voltarian, crops out on every other page of this brilliant novel. An English writer hitherto unknown to the American public, Miss Jameson promises to take her place among the leading intellectual novelists of the time. For while "The Happy Highways" is not without a plot, and abounds in situations that might be seized upon by any fictionist, it is primarily a novel of the intellect. The characters are real, but we are not interested chiefly in them; the story is entertaining, yet it does not hold the centre of the stage; what principally forces our attention is the author's vivid and striking ideas. Dogmatism, decrepit tradition, all those staid and grey-bearded conventions that rust the mind and atrophy the soul, meet with Miss Jameson's unflinching attack; and her piercing insight and merciless humor carry that attack to success. "The Happy Highways" is a book that seems written with the very life-blood of the author, with the very core of her brain fibre; it is a book that will compel thought, a book that deserves a widespread hearing.

THE BROWN MOTH, by Oscar Graeve (Dodd, Mead).

There is apparently no end to the sudden vogue of novels dealing with middle-class people placed in a middle-class setting. In "The Brown Moth" Mr. Graeve has tried to give an accurate picture of everyday life in New York City, with particular emphasis on its relation to the character and career of Lola Kargo—"one of the many thousands—a small brown moth fluttering through the labyrinth of streets".

The book, despite the fact that it masquerades in the newer guise of the psychological novel, is actually the old and somewhat threadbare romance of "the poor working girl". And occasionally, through the disguise, appear such phrases as "a flush upon her rounded cheek", "the rapids of youth", and "the tranquil waters of age"; so that the reader is quite prepared to

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hear Lola dramatically recite the familiar "I was an innocent goil" speech. But she doesn't. The heroine of Mr. Graeve's book doesn't want to be thought of in that way. Hardly! She does her very best to be wicked, but somehow, even her wickedness cannot rise above the general atmosphere of the commonplace.

If such a book were written in some particularly new or startling way, there might be some excuse for it, but the author unfortunately has allowed himself to be drawn into the all-pervading mediocrity. However, there is nothing obscene about the book. It is merely the uninteresting story of an uninteresting person. For those who like that sort of thing, "The Brown Moth" is just the sort of thing they'll like.

THE SPLENDID FOLLY, by Margaret Pedler (Doran).

Max Errington "held her with the fierce possessive grip of primitive man claiming the chosen woman as his mate", but withal he had an "unutterable tenderness", and he "would risk his immortal soul for Diana Quentin", whom he married with the warning that there was one secret that he must keep from her. She soon found just cause for suspicion of infidelity, but his supposed mistress proved to be merely a cousin, a disguised duchess whom he was helping politically. Diana's "splendid folly" was to renounce the career of a prima donna on discovering that Errington was really a nobleman. As his wife she could not be a professional singer.

There are familiar scenes of love, jealousy, and reconciliation in the manner of Ethel M. Dell, and the story has a general character that usually appeals to a large class of novel readers.

THE GREAT ADVENTURE, by Harold Bindloss (Stokes).

The "great adventure", the salvaging of a wrecked vessel by which Lister wins a name and a wife, recalls in vast contrast Victor Hugo's tragic "Toilers of the Sea". Expressions such as "his look got keen", and "his face was wet by" (not with) "sweat", and "he was highly strung" (a fastidious improvement on the usual ungrammatical *high-strung*), are typical of the style of Harold Bindloss, an Englishman whose novels number over thirty. "Lister's Great Adventure" appeared in England in 1919 under the title "The Master of the House".

THE NEXT CORNER, by Kate Jordan (Little, Brown).

The author has taken no risks in writing this book. She has pressed into service much stock romantic paraphernalia of the well-tried sort that can be counted on to produce thrills. Some of the story's ingredients are: an American girl's infatuation for a Spanish grandee—his castle perched on giddy cliffs—a murder—suicide—a fatal letter, the possible arrival of which impends like a doom.

But the novel is more than a story of exciting incident and adventure. One notes a refreshing absence of the hero-through-and-through and the villain-through-and-through treatment. There is deft characterization and a background of psychological analysis.

The book is exotically flavored, full of atmosphere, movement, color. It is markedly feverish. It holds the interest from the first page to the last.

JENNY ESSENDEN, by Anthony Pryde (McBride).

This novel is an odd blend of realism and musical-comedy romanticisim. It concerns the secret marriage of Mark

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Sturt, an English business man, to Maisie Archdale, wealthy, of good family. The circumstances of the marriage are such that Mark does not feel justified in living with Maisie as his wife. He drifts into an affair with Jenny Essenden, a woman of doubtful reputation. In the end, husband and wife are united.

The motivation of the secret marriage is such as to give an air of farcical unreality. There is much reliance upon dialogue that is often strained, but at times entertaining. The chief stock-in-trade of the book lies in a deliberate, rather repellent emphasis on the theme of sex. The author's imagination appears to wilt in those few stretches devoid of love interest.

THE SISTERS-IN-LAW, by Gertrude Atherton (Stokes).

Mrs. Atherton brings to her stories an unfailing vitality, an exuberance of experience which serve to carry them along triumphant despite their numerous weaknesses. Her latest novel "The Sisters-in-Law" alternately irritates by its many crudities and delights by its energy and aggressiveness. It completely lacks the more distinctive merits of the modern school of novelists—the surgeon's scalpel probing into places hidden and diseased, bringing them to light for the sun's cleansing, becomes a clumsy backwoodsman's knife hacking at the bite of a poisonous snake. Where Mrs. Atherton scores, and scores heavily, is in her power to portray in sensuous, living terms, people and places. Her characters *live*, if not always as human beings, at least almost always as sentient beings. And if her finished product is sometimes vulgar, we may with proper gratitude excuse her as having *les défauts de ses qualités*.

The novel opens in San Francisco at the time of the earthquake and confines itself for the most part to California. Lovely Alexina Groom, daughter of a proud "old" family, is contrasted with the dark-browed, hard-working sister of Alexina's worthless husband, Mortimer Dwight. The two women learn to love the same man, and upon the victory of the former the story ends. The husband is disposed of with an ease which could be equaled only in real life. The study of him, a social climber and snob, is the best thing in the book; we have known his like and no apprentice hand fashioned him.

We miss much of the humor which made "The Aristocrats" so delightful. However, here is a big piece of writing; and though most imperfect in detail, the larger whole is not unworthy of its talented author.

THE MYSTERIOUS RIDER, by Zane Grey (Harper).

A certain type of story of the west has become a staple in American fiction: the tale of cattle thieves, "gun fights", and grim strangers with terrible pasts. Such a novel is "The Mysterious Rider". There is much "red blood" and stirring action in it, and the terse style carries the narrative forward at a rapid rate. The psychology is doubtful: emotional processes are distorted in order to further the plot. The dialogue, much of it forceful, grows melodramatic at times, resembling the words flashed on the screen of a motion picture theatre to explain a "wild west" thriller.

On the whole, a good story for those who prefer literary gin to literary champagne.

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FICTION IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The following lists of books in demand in February in the public libraries in the United States have been compiled from reports made by two hundred representative libraries, in every section of the country and in cities of all sizes down to ten thousand population. The order of choice is as stated by the librarians.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
2.	The Mysterious Rider	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
3.	The Valley of Silent Men	*James Oliver Curwood*	COSMOPOLITAN
4.	The Age of Innocence	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
5.	A Poor Wise Man	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
6.	The Captives	*Hugh Walpole*	DORAN

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
2.	The Age of Innocence	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
3.	The Mysterious Rider	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
4.	The Top of the World	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
5.	Potterism	*Rose Macaulay*	BONI
6.	Miss Lulu Bett	*Zona Gale*	APPLETON

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
2.	The Age of Innocence	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
3.	The Mysterious Rider	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
4.	Potterism	*Rose Macaulay*	BONI
5.	This Side of Paradise	*F. Scott Fitzgerald*	SCRIBNER
6.	The Valley of Silent Men	*James Oliver Curwood*	COSMOPOLITAN

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	The Age of Innocence	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
2.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
3.	The Mysterious Rider	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
4.	The Trumpeter Swan	*Temple Bailey*	PENN
5.	This Side of Paradise	*F. Scott Fitzgerald*	SCRIBNER
6.	The Valley of Silent Men	*James Oliver Curwood*	COSMOPOLITAN

WESTERN STATES

1.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
2.	The Mysterious Rider	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
3.	The Age of Innocence	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
4.	A Poor Wise Man	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
5.	The Great Desire	*Alexander Black*	HARPER
6.	Miss Lulu Bett	*Zona Gale*	APPLETON

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
2.	The Age of Innocence	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
3.	The Mysterious Rider	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
4.	Potterism	*Rose Macaulay*	BONI
5.	The Top of the World	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
6.	The Trumpeter Swan	*Temple Bailey*	PENN

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GENERAL BOOKS IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The titles have been scored by the simple process of giving each a credit of six for each time it appears as first choice, and so down to a score of one for each time it appears in sixth place. The total score for each section and for the whole country determines the order of choice in the table herewith.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1.	Margot Asquith: An Autobiography	*Margot Asquith*	DORAN
2.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
3.	Crowding Memories	*Mrs. Thomas Bailey Aldrich*	HOUGHTON
4.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
5.	Memoirs of the Empress Eugénie	*Comte Fleury*	APPLETON
6.	Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

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4.	White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
5.	Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
6.	Roaming Through the West Indies	*Harry A. Franck*	CENTURY

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3.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
4.	Roaming Through the West Indies	*Harry A. Franck*	CENTURY
5.	White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
6.	Steeplejack	*James Gibbons Huneker*	SCRIBNER

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	Margot Asquith: An Autobiography	*Margot Asquith*	DORAN
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FOREIGN NOTES AND COMMENT

FOR the first time in the history of the German stage a play has been produced in Germany that was written by a Ukranian. The author's neat name is Wolodymr Wynnytschenko. His drama is entitled "The Lie" and was performed at the Stadttheater in Nuremberg the last week of February.

The French Academy has delegated Jean Richepin as its representative at the tercentenary celebration of the birth of La Fontaine to be held at Château-Thierry on July 8.

George Middleton, according to "Le Temps", has given his unqualified approval to the movement recently set on foot in Paris to establish a foreign theatre. In reply to Mr. Middleton's hope that American plays may be welcomed to this novel Paris theatre, "Le Temps" says they will, but that it is a bit premature to attempt to announce the program, the theatre still being in the age of discussion.

Ivan Vazoff, born in 1850, the most celebrated writer of Bulgaria, has enjoyed no end of memorials apropos of his seventieth birthday. The last of these was a series of postage stamps in six different denominations bearing his picture. It is probably the first time that the philatelist will have a substantial opportunity to come to the aid of the poet.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle sailed from Melbourne for England on February 4. The purpose of his visit has been to gather material for a book on Australia. To judge from a statement he made just before leaving, his treatise will be written with an international slant. He told the Australians that it was unwise to expect their country to be populated entirely by subjects of the United Kingdom and advised that they offer inducements to Italians and South Americans.

Woodrow Wilson's "History of the American People" has been translated into French by Désiré Roustan and supplied with an introduction by Emile Boutroux of the French Academy. In speaking of the work, "Le Temps" said on February 4 that it was written when *l'ancien président des Etats-Units* was at Princeton. This is correct as to time and place, but as to the *ancien,* does "Le Temps" believe that Woodrow Wilson became the melancholy product of our governmental system known as an ex-president as soon as the returns were all in?

A notable event in the history of the Spanish Academy was the recent reception given to Armando Palacio Valdes who was elected in truth fourteen years ago, but somewhat like Clemenceau and the French Academy at the present time, declined the opportunity to be formally inaugurated. His lecture on his predecessor, José Maria de Pereda, was confined largely to a discussion of the *littérateur* and originality. He also took occasion to remark that the Spanish people, while not suffering from superfluous vitality, are by no means decadent, degenerate, or otherwise hopeless.

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It is now brought to light that the reason why Maurice Maeterlinck's "new" drama, "The Mayor of Stilemonde", written in 1916, was not produced until 1921, is because no French-speaking actor could be found who would don the uniform of a German officer—which seems like a quite adequate reason. The play deals with the invasion of Belgium.

Just as Kenneth J. Saunders brings out his "Gotama Buddha" in this country, Fritz Mauthner publishes his "The Last Death of Gotama Buddha" in Germany. Mauthner comes from South Germany and is one of the best-known popular philologists now living. He is the Bishop Trench of today. His work, as might have been expected, deals largely with the language of Buddha.

General Cadorna, Commander-in-Chief of the Italian army, has brought life into the book market of his country by announcing that he will shortly publish his "Memoirs of the Great War". According to his statement in the "Idea Nazionale", he is scrupulously avoiding everything that resembles polemics.

Leonid Andreyev's "Jekaterina Iwanowna" has been translated into German and performed in Berlin—to the profound disappointment of the theatre-going public. The husband attempts to take the life of his wife because of imagined infidelity. Enraged and offended, she really becomes unfaithful and they part. Unable however to live without her, especially after her confession of guilt, he again takes her into his home and they move through the rest of the drama, and their lives, as two "living corpses"—quite living in fact so far as theatrical psychology is concerned. The Germans are apparently sorry they made the discovery.

Fernand Baldensperger, professor at the Sorbonne and Strasbourg, has quite vigorously reopened the case of James Fenimore Cooper. By way of editing a letter Cooper wrote while American Consul at Paris in 1826, and which has since lain in perfect peace in the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Monsieur Baldensperger says in the "Revue de Littérature Comparée": "It is high time that we study Cooper seriously, for the works that have been written on him are mediocre. We must look into his influence, not merely on French Romanticism but on French diplomacy, finance and education as well." The letter in question is of no significance. In it Cooper acknowledged the receipt of a medal given him by the French government. But Monsieur Baldensperger's appeal to his fellow citizens to return to Cooper is doubly refreshing. Some American student thirsting to see his name in print should beat the Frenchman to it, as Tennyson might not have said.

Gabriel Faure, after having forsaken creative literature for a season, during which he has written some charming studies, including his "Hours in Italy", has returned to his first and greater love with a novel entitled "Les Amants Enchainés" (The Fettered Lovers). It is said to be written in a "supple, chastened, sober and yet passionate style", and to be highly apropos.

Renato Serra, a relatively young Italian writer, has published a book which, to judge from the advance notices, deserves consideration. Entitled

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"Esame di Coscienza di un Letterato" (which might be roughly translated as "An Examination into the Conscience of an Intelligent Human Being"), it attempts to prove the thesis that war creates soldiers but not poets. The war is over and the evolutionist Croce is an evolutionist still. Love, the sun, art, war and patriotism are still the only themes that attract D'Annunzio. It is unjust to attach excessive value to something written by someone who lost his life on the field of battle. There is much to be said for this.

The belief that the censorship is privileged to be stupid only in the United States, needs revision. About a month ago, Arthur Schnitzler's "Reigen" (The Circle) was performed in the Kleines Schauspielhaus in Berlin, with the result that those responsible for the performance escaped imprisonment only through the decision of the Civil Court of Berlin. The affair has been discussed in Germany almost as much as the question of indemnity. Maximilian Harden would have placed Schnitzler, the company, and the spectators in jail had it been within his power. But the court decided that "'Reigen' could do no harm to morally and mentally sound people" and dismissed the case. Now, other theatres are booking "Reigen" and there is a run on the box offices. The unexpurgated book is of course on sale everywhere, including New York, and has been for a long while. Schnitzler wrote the play in 1897. Everybody admits that it is an unusual study in sexual relations. It is time for a dissertation on the censor as the best salesman.

The death of Carl Hauptmann at his home in Silesia in the first week of February closes, it may be said without impiety, a strange case. The senior of his brother Gerhart Hauptmann by four years, publishing two books to Gerhart's one, a lyric writer, novelist and dramatist of undenied ability, surrounded from the completion of his first work in 1892 by a small group who regarded him as the greater of the two brothers, he never became sufficiently popular to be called successful. It does not explain the case to say that he stood in the shadow of his more gifted brother; for it is the relative endowment of the two that has been debated. When Carl Hauptmann delivered a series of lectures at Columbia University some time ago, his auditors were struck by the fact that he sat while lecturing and did not look them in the eye. This goes a long way toward being symbolic of his lack of popularity. He was more interested in philosophy than in people; metaphysics attracted him while men did not; he could be warmed by a legend whereas life left him cold. But as a philosopher, a critic, and a creative writer he will not soon be forgotten.

ALLEN WILSON PORTERFIELD

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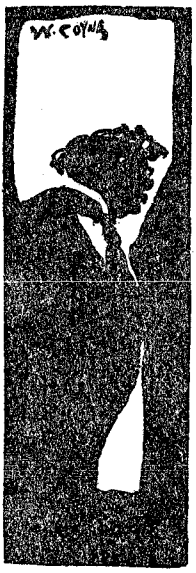
THE GOSSIP SHOP



To the American mind the newspaper interviewer, prodigiously efficient, exquisitely nosey, is as common as strawberry shortcake in the proper season. To Gilbert Chesterton, who since claims that he has become quite fond of them, the first appearance of a "sob sister" was like a genie bursting from its miraculous bottle in an Arabian Nights tale.

"I was in my state-room", says Mr. Chesterton, "outside New York harbor, when I heard a gentle knock at the door. I opened, to find a pleasant young lady with a business-like note book and pencil in her hand. 'Mr. Chesterton,' she said abruptly, 'what do you think of New York's crime wave?' That was the first I'd heard of it.

"'Have they a crime wave?' said I.

"'Ah yes,' said she. 'I'm from the New York "———", and I must have your opinion on our crime wave, for the afternoon edition of my paper. There has been the steadiest influx of strange criminals into New York.'

"'Ah,' said I. 'I understand, now. It's undoubtedly due to the increase in visiting English men of letters.' Whereupon she vanished, making hasty notes. I fancy she must have been an excellent swimmer."

Major Charles Norris and Kathleen Norris have sailed for Europe. Major Norris's new novel is said to be a most unusual discussion of marriage problems. Just before they left Your Gossip found Mrs. Norris. She is a stately woman, with stately manners, and a rare sense of humor. She told many stories of young Stephen Vincent Benét and his dog, in those extremely young days on the Pacific coast, before we even so much as knew there was such a person as the young poet. Then she told us of her *real* novel. She has been working on it for three years, it seems. This is not an eighty thousand word serial. It is a work on which she has put what she believes to be the best that is in her and, on this book, she feels her reputation will be made or lost. It is the study of the lives in a large middle-class American family. It is a record of small successes and great failures. It is a picture of the struggles of the parents to dominate the lives of their children. It will be the attempt of a woman to show from her standpoint the complete picture of the American family of average means. We have seldom heard an author so filled with the sense of a book as Mrs. Norris is with this one. We are sorry that we must wait for it so long.

Burton Rascoe, of Chicago and Oklahoma, shot into New York the other morning on the Century Limited and shot back again on the Century Limited in the afternoon. Probably, he brought along a novel he has been finishing for several months. If so, he disposed of it more quickly than most.

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Your Gossip did not see him. We consider it a great misfortune, for, morbidly, we wished to observe the scars on his classic features, which the doctors say may, some time, wear off. It all happened last Christmas. He was playing the mendacious rôle of Santa Claus on his father's ranch, when his beautiful cotton whiskers caught fire, and burned his face. We are going to Chicago soon to see the scars.

In the days of the pioneers, after a journey across hot prairies and through undared mountain passes, with the whoops of Indians following at night, a tiny girl was carried into California on the saddle-front of Jim Beckwourth, the celebrated white chief of the Crows. It was Ina Donna Coolbrith, friend of Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Joaquin Miller, of whose poetry Bret Harte said: "The sweetest note in California literature." The author of "Songs of the Golden Gate" has outlived all the other members of the famous group which founded "The Overland Monthly". She has come on to New York City after years of inactivity and suffering because of rheumatism and, curiously enough, has there found a complete restoration to health. For the first time in many years she is again writing poetry. Only the other day Your Gossip paid a visit to her apartment at the St. James. Quiet, sweet, gentle, in a lavender dressing gown with a white lace scarf thrown over her head, she told of those early struggles in California; of a life dedicated to library work when she would have liked to be writing. Of the older group and the younger group among the *littérateurs* of the Pacific coast, and of the great honor California had done her—it gave her the laurel crown of "poet laureate" at the time of the Exposition. We looked out from her window over roof tops and whirling steam. "It's nice not to have rheumatism, but I miss the Sequoias," she said. Flowers in her room showed the care of friends, but she is interested in the new currents of verse, and always happy to talk with young people who are trying to write.

At the present moment of writing, Frederick O'Brien is sitting in a room at a New York City club, correcting proofs for his new book. At the moment of finishing he will leave for a cruise of some two years. The party with which he will travel has already sailed from Los Angeles in the "Wisdom Second", a yacht which is said to be the most elaborately equipped with motion picture apparatus of any vessel which has ever put out from any port. We suppose it is well stocked with other materials for a jovial voyage. They are headed for the Marquesas and until 1922 will travel around the world, after visiting the lesser known islands of the South Seas. Mr. O'Brien will probably not stay with them throughout the entire voyage.

N. M. L. sends us word from Richmond, of the first night of Cabell's first play. Wouldn't it have been amusing to be there! "One reads everywhere nowadays", she says, "that nobody must suppress James Branch Cabell; but here in his home town we don't try to suppress Mr. Cabell, we try to *expand* him. Even Mr. Le Gallienne's scathing criticism does not dislodge him from his pedestal but, in our eyes, only adds more cubits to the Cabell stature. This attitude led the Little Theatre League of Richmond to do its utmost in art when producing the author's play 'Balthazar's Daughter', dramatized from a tale of me-

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diæval Italy originally published in 'Harper's Magazine'. This is the first Cabell play to be produced anywhere, although 'The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck' will be put on in New York next winter.

"As the curtain fell there was a lone cry of 'Au-thor!', which, not being taken up, sounded like the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Then we—the audience—'caught on' that we were actually urban enough to be having a first night in our midst, and 'Au-thor!' 'Au-thor!'—'Cabell!' 'Cabbell!!' resounded.

"The dramatist, however, would not take his cue. Mr. Cabell, who under criticism is about as sensitive as the Rock of Gibraltar, is quite the contrary when enduring admiration, and so he sat for some time trying to ignore the outcriers. At last, however, less in response to them than to his wife's urgent whisperings, he rose and bowed twice."

New Yorkers incurred a double debt to A. A. Milne and the Theatre Guild for supplying Laura Hope Crews with a vehicle for her very beautiful art of comedy in "Mr. Pim Passes By". A bit of stage business that plays an important part in Miss Crews's rôle is the sewing of a pair of curtains, which, begun in the first act, is completed in the last. To Your Gossip this sewing took on a symbolical meaning quite unintended by the author and the producer. Beginning merely as the "business" of Olivia Marden, the sewing became glorified; from a mere physical act it grew into the spirit, the art, the sensitively wrought pattern of an actress who wove a whole play together with her perfect command of the delicacies and refinements and subtleties of high comedy. This is so rare a spectacle on the American stage that one's gratitude demands print or spoken words for satisfactory expression.

It was an admirable first night audience and Your Gossip caught glimpses of Mrs. James Harvey Robinson, Alice Duer Miller, and Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Quinn. Also of Mr. Edgar Allan Woolf, who is said to have written more successful vaudeville sketches than any other author on the top of the ground. Then there was F. P. A. whom we had not seen since that calamitous day last fall when he took three sets of tennis from us with only feeble interference; Mrs. Adams, who told us of the extraordinary perspicacity of her Persian kitten; and a host of the eighteen-inch, heavy artillery critics all agog with the pleasure of Miss Crews's finished performance.

But what Your Gossip got no satisfaction about at all, no matter where he asked, is, who is Miss Phyllis Povah who played the rôle of Dinah, the ingénue of Mr. Milne's comedy? It was a vivacious and most engaging performance which she gave. But this is not the real point; from the end of the first act we conceived a firm conviction that Miss Povah could write, and most acceptably, if she really set her mind to it. You ask why we thought so? Alas! we know not what bred this notion, unless it was her natural and abundant force of self-expression. Is it a good or a bad guess?

We are always whispering real news of this kind in the ears of the mighty (editors) and they are forever smiling at us indulgently.

One of the first novels we ever read was "The Lightning Conductor". Were it not for the fact that Mrs. A. M. Williamson looked so extremely young, we would scarcely have dared tell her of this fact. She has been in New York

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City for some time, arranging for the publication of her new books. Now she is on her way back to a cottage in Bath, England, where she will continue her writing. She believes very strongly in certain psychic influences. Being a Celt, she feels that she has a closer connection with things spiritual than many, and that since his death Mr. Williamson has constantly aided her work. For this reason the books will continue to be signed, C. N. and A. M. Williamson. She then told us the strangest tale we have ever heard. Since she is noted for turning out plots, one a minute, we accused her of trying a new one on us; but she maintains that the story is strictly true. All right, we believe. When she was in Mexico before the war, she paid a visit to a genial gambling-den proprietor. Whether it was because she trusted him enough to ask him to carry her purse, or whether it was her gay personality that captured him, we could not ascertain, though we had our opinion. At any rate, he gave her some money for a pet charity on which she was working at the time—and she told him that he ought to come to a real gambling joint at Monte Carlo, and visit her. The Williamsons were then living near Monaco. Several years later during the war he paid his respects. They had a splendid visit, and Mrs. Williamson told him of her Red Cross work. "You just wait", said the gentle gambler; "I'll get you some real money this time." And off he went. Not long after he came back with two hundred pounds, which he presented humbly. "I won this up there," he said, jerking his head toward the casino. Then, just as he was going, "Say, I used counterfeit money—a fake twenty franc note—to get that for you." Needless to say the lady was surprised. "What would you have done, Gossip!" she demanded, and we really didn't know.

Eugene O'Neill writes from his lighthouse in Provincetown that the only news he has to tell of himself is very Jeremiah in quality. Three of his long plays have been about-to-be-produced all winter, but the season wanes, and it looks as though we should have to wait until next year for them. Meanwhile we have "The Emperor Jones", "Diff'rent", and a new-published volume, with promises of more to come. "Of course", he says, "I am not idle meanwhile. I am hard at work on the second act of a new four-act play,—thereby proving that opium and playwrighting have much in common as habits which not even an earthquake can disturb."

Joseph Hergesheimer recently astounded an audience of New Haven ladies. He had been asked to make an address at Yale University. Supposing that he was to face an audience of callow undergraduates forced to attend the affair, he prepared a paper which he thought would keep them awake—"For Men Only", so to speak, and on the subject, "The Feminine Nuisance in Literature". When he discovered a generous number of the gentle sex before him, there was really nothing to do but read the paper. He did so. The smoke of laughter and amazement which followed his fiery talk has not yet subsided. Your Gossip encountered it only the other day. It has been more than a nine days' wonder. We didn't talk to the New Haven ladies. Whether or not they were delighted, we do not know. We do know that the undergraduates were amused.

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The publishers announce George Bernard Shaw's new work as "the author's scientific, religious and political testament, as well as his supreme exploit in dramatic literature". Five plays it has, covering the period from the Fall of Adam, or slightly before, to the year 31920 A. D. The philosophical, or somewhat biological con-

tention, or one of them, of the volume, is that man will ultimately live to a good old age of three hundred years. The publisher adds, with a hop skip and jump, "It is not a mere jeu d'esprit." Indeed no! There is to be a preface, too—its title, "The Infidel Half Century". Shaw *seriously* (the underlining is Your Gossip's) contends that the extension of human life contemplated in his play is a scientific possibility and must be included as such in the religion of Creative Evolution which, he maintains, has been taking shape in the chaos of unbelief of the past fifty years and is now ready for adoption "as the New Faith of the world". On with the dance, G. B. S.

More literary sectionalism! The Minneapolis "Tribune" claiming Hamlin Garland, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Zona Gale for the northwest, says:

It was not to be expected that a country so new as the Northwest could quickly rival, in literary accomplishment, the older sections of the country. Literature does not flower over night. Yet a body of literature is growing up in the Northwest which, in time, is bound to arrest the attention of the country. Already such progress has been made that the Northwest may, in the output of the contemporary novel, challenge, without fear, any part of America. Literary commentators are now paying as much attention to the recent books from the Northwest as to the recent books from all other sections of America combined.

The Northwest in the past has been proud of its flour mills, its iron mines, its agricultural development, and what not. It has gained a good deal of notoriety through its association with the Nonpartisan league. It is pleasant to think that an era is coming when, aside from its materialistic greatness, aside from its political shame, it will be known for its contribution to the finer arts. That such a destiny lies ahead of the Northwest events of the past year amply attest. The Northwest is rapidly coming into its own.

From gay Hollywood, Sir Gilbert Parker writes that he is busy each day in the studios from 8:30 A. M. until 6 P. M. Before this, we had thought that at the movie capital the rule was, late hours, not long hours, but we have since been told by unprejudiced authorities that Sir Gilbert and Mrs. Rinehart are the two most earnest workers in the colony.

In an hour and a half, the Gossip Shop aged ten years! It happened in the office of "The Smart Set". Life is rapid when one sits between Messrs. Mencken and Nathan. Life is very earnest, too! On the left, Mr. Mencken. On the right, Mr. Nathan. Conversation jumping across the Gossip, under, over, all about! Conversation jumping from literature to gin. Conversation! "Wish we had a lot of the stories we rejected five years ago as 'not fit to print'," said left-hand. "Yes", agreed right, "we could print 'em now." "And, George," said left, "do you remember that story from the

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south—you know, the *one good story* from the south?" Agreement came into the Gossip's right ear. "Let's send for it again and have a look at it. We can't print it; but it's nice to have a look at it about every three months. Perhaps THE BOOKMAN could use it." And the Gossip Shop thought perhaps.

Carl Sandburg has been making a tour of the south. One critic in Columbia, South Carolina, was so overcome by the melody of the poet's voice that he actually waxed lyrical:

> He read in a very sonorous and convincing way, his voice and tone rather reproducing the effects he creates in words by a very subdued melody, as if he were playing on muffled or almost muted strings, or with a handkerchief soaked in tears, stuffed into the throat of his saxophone—if he will pardon the jazz of the figure.

Laurence Gomme, by the way, has started up in business for himself again. He used to run the Little Book Shop Around the Corner, you know, and the circulars for his business were written by no less a writer of advertising copy than Richard Le Gallienne. His new place, on Park Avenue, in New York, is called the Neighborhood Book Shop, and presents, we understand, something of a new idea in "community bookstores".

A new study of Edgar Allan Poe has recently appeared. The author, Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, presents Poe in a new light, studying not only his personality but the progress of appreciation of his work in various European countries. In this connection one turns with something like horror to a series of Psycho-Analytical Studies by Lorine Pruett in "The American Journal of Psychology". Does genius always spring from the Freudian complex? What chance had poor Poe to earn a living as a coal-heaver, with this for his inhibition—"Now a tubercular father and cousin, an eccentric uncle, a drunkard brother as well as many relatives known for a 'too free use of the bottle', and an imbecile sister, coupled with the peculiar genius of the poet himself, his sensitiveness to the effects of stimulants and temporary fits of insanity toward the last of his life, form conclusive evidence that there was in the Poe family a decided organic inferiority."

Rabindranath Tagore was lately shown two verses which an autograph collector had secured, and asked in which of his published works, if any, they might be found. The poet looked them over and said he had a recollection of having written them to be published in England. "But it is difficult to recognize them in that translation," he added.

Your Gossip was willingly placed in a perilous gulf between Frank Crowninshield, the suave editor of suaver "Vanity Fair" and Avery Hopwood, the J. P. Morgan of playwrights. Interest skipped from Mr. Crowninshield's necktie to Mr. Hopwood's ideas about moving pictures. Hollywood, California, apparently, is now the literary centre of America. The great and the near-great in literature can no longer shun the gold mine of the film coast. Mr. Hopwood has just come back from film-cutting and titling, to put on another couple of plays. (Is it five, or six Hopwood or semi-Hopwood dramas that Broadway knows now?) One thing, he says, stands out above all others in Hollywood. Speed! By that, let's hasten to explain, he means the speed of motor cars. There is only one safe

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method of travel, and that is the air. As long as you're in an aeroplane in Hollywood, there is comparative safety. To prove this Mr. Hopwood will show you a scar received in an automobile accident. He wishes to give this word of advice to all authors or others who may be lured to Hollywood. "Travel by Air."

The most vivid personality to cross the doors of the Shop during the month is the astounding F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose next novel will strike an extremely different note from "This Side of Paradise", but a note that will be as daring and as impudent as his laugh. The first time Your Gossip met him was over a lunch in a famous Princeton club. He wasn't famous then. We talked of Stephen Benét, of John Peale Bishop, of Edmund Wilson, and of others then unknown, who have since jumped into notice in the Princeton and Yale groups. Then we watched him wave his cigarette at an audience one night not long ago, and capture them by nervous young ramblings, until he had the room (mostly "flappers") swaying with delight. Then, the autograph hunters! This admiration embarrassed him much—but after we had escaped into the outer darkness he acknowledged, with a grin, that he rather liked it.

The list of poems selected by the BOOKMAN from the January periodicals is as follows: "Penreb's Tomb", Babette Deutsch (New Republic, Jan. 26), "Poetæ Minores", Albert Edmund Trombly (Nation, Jan. 26), "To a Door", Hazel Hall (Contemporary Verse), "My Purple Gown from Tyre", Benjamin Rosenbaum (Poetry), "The Sorrowful Masquerade", John Hall Wheelock and "The Uses of Things", Mary Carolyn Davies (Touchstone), "Lone", Walter de la Mare (New Republic, Jan. 12), "Misgiving", Robert Frost (Yale Review).

The amiable and eminent Clayton Hamilton continues to declare most emphatically that that report recently circulated in the east that he was about to return from the famed Hollywood to New York, was a frame-up pulled by his enemies. Says he's going to stick until June and then "a year or more after that". Having a fine time with "such good old pals" as Gertrude Atherton, Gouverneur Morris, Rupert Hughes, Thompson Buchanan, and Charles Kenyon. "Seen on the Stage", his latest book, he believes is his "swan-song as a dramatic critic".

We find literature even in the trade organ of the Fifth Avenue Coach Company, New York City. Witness the following. Your Gossip does not apologize for its inclusion. We believe that not only is it a great piece of literature, but a document of fine human understanding:

> What is this you ask of us—that we put a stop to "spooning" atop Fifth Avenue 'buses?
>
> Please tell us how it is you find spooning by some of our junior patrons so disgusting and revolting. Concerning the lad and lassie, you mention, you say they were the object of much comment and laughter on the part of others atop the 'bus you availed of. So it should be—and we will venture the opinion the comment and laughter were spontaneous and good natured;—for "all the world loves a lover" and who of us is so callous as to withhold his blessing when witnessing this outward display of youthful and innocent affection to say nothing of the pleasure it gives one in reminiscing over the happy times and good old friends of yester-year?
>
> To be sure, atop a Fifth Avenue 'bus may be an unconventional place for participation in this the greatest of all "pastimes". But where in this great city of ours are Bob and Betty to go, safe from the slander of idle tongues, to carry on their love-making?

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Your Gossip recently paid a visit to Vermont, arriving in a bluster of snow. We were surprised to find that the mere mention of "Main Street" in old Bennington, caused a flurry in the church where we were trying to talk, and when we touched on the fact that Gopher Prairie reminded us of a certain town where we used to live, and that we had heard a rumor that there was a Main Street in Bennington, one lady bristled so perceptibly that we hastened to retract. Robert Frost has bought a delightful house on the line between Bennington and Shaftsbury. It is a small house with a peaked gable and a door with nice pillars. He is the same gentle Mr. Frost, iron-grey hair, soft voice, and keen eyes. He is mildly surprised that he should actually have been financially successful with his poetry this year; but nevertheless pleased. When we visited him he was working on some new long poems, which probably means a return to his earlier manner. Mrs. Frost is very much like him; so is his daughter Leslie; so, probably, is his son, but he was away at school in Bennington. We talked of poetry, of snow, and of the cat, "Colin", who was named because of the shortage of coal last winter, which proves that even great poets, or their families, as the case may be, can be guilty of bad puns. However, it's a peach of a cat!

THE BOOKMAN'S convict friend writes from New York's "honor prison":

No doubt you have read a great deal about the so-called crime wave. This has done us no end of harm. I think you will agree with me when I say that the severity of punishment has never lessened crimes. Indeed, it sometimes has increased the number of certain offenses by exciting the passions for revenge in cases where the punishment was deemed unjust or too severe. As a matter of course the same causes which induce an increase of crime, also produce an increase in the number of criminals. No other result can be expected.

And he adds:

I have two friends, young men who are very anxious to secure a copy of some book on "Synonyms". These chaps are trying to fit themselves for the freedom they shall some day enjoy. Can you help them?

Mary Newton Stanard, of Richmond, Virginia, published in the September number of "The Southern Review" an article entitled: "The Real Beginning of American Democracy", which was the story, drawn from original records, of the legislative assembly held at old Jamestown in 1619. Imagine her surprise when she received, the other day, a copy of the Christmas supplement of the North China "Daily News", and found her innocent disquisition quoted in full and sandwiched between advertisements of wine merchants and tobacco dealers of Shanghai, headed by an editorial note saying: "Although the occasion described befell in hot summer there is something about the spirit it breathes which makes it especially suitable for Christmas good fellowship."

"I was afraid," she writes, "that the Pilgrims would put Jamestown off the American map this year, but I scarcely expected to find it in China."

Haven't you often had your pulses quicken and your heart stir at the strains of "The March of the Men of Harlech"? The author of "Gret", "The House of Punishment", "Ann of the Singing Heart", etc., who is now living in Portland, Oregon, was born

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in that picturesque little village of Harlech, Merionethshire, North Wales. It has seen much history since the times of the Romans. Margaret took refuge there after her husband, Henry the Sixth, was defeated. "My father", Mrs. Mantle told Fred Lockley, "was a landscape painter. He painted the scenery of our rugged mountains for rich men who preferred to live in cities and take their nature second-handed. Relatives of ours had gone to America and they frequently sent American papers and books to us. I was a very small girl when I decided that America was the kind of country I wanted to live in and that Americans were the kind of people I wanted to live among. I came here as a girl. To be exact, this was in 1900. I came to Portland. I was married here and Portland has been my home ever since. As a matter of fact, I am an enthusiast for the charm and beauty of the Pacific coast. I can't imagine wanting to live anywhere else."

The formation of a Theatre of Allied Arts in Berkeley, California, for the purpose of encouraging interest in literary forms of drama, is worthy of consideration by other cities.

A university unit is its present interest. The State University with its Greek Theatre has done so much for the widening and deepening of an appreciation of the drama (in the presentation, by the English Club and other organizations, of Greek plays, miracle and morality plays, and Shakespearian and modern plays) that it is the logical place for such a unit. The recognized place of Professor Charles Mills Gayley in the field of research in the history of the drama has given the background of scholarship so highly desirable.

The most original of the dramatic work at the university is the annual production, since 1912, of a play by the women of the university, its theme usually dealing with the place of woman in the world. The Partheneia (from *parthenos*, maiden), as the annual pageant is called, is usually presented in Faculty Glade. Priscilla Cavagnaro wrote the Partheneia performed last April. It presented Petrarch begging Dante to give him the interpretation of life and was entitled "The Poet's Answer". The mood of the Italian Renaissance in the natural setting of the glade was further suggested by the music. The Partheneia to be given in April is "The Lilies of Mirones". The setting is early California, the heroine, Mirones, a Spanish maiden. Janet Brown and Josephine Brown are the authors.

"We so seldom get a religious poem that is handled with freshness and sincerity that we are glad to publish the two poems by Miss Jessie MacDonald," said Harriet Monroe, editor of "Poetry: A Magazine of Verse", in the March number of which Miss MacDonald's poems appear. Miss MacDonald is a native of Melbourne, Australia. Her poem entitled "A Prayer" reads:

Love us, Lord, but not too much.
Come thou near, yet not too near.
All thy laughing splendor spoils
What we daily see and fear,
What we bear, and do, and touch.
Love us still, but not too much.

Come thou near, Lord, not too near:
Let us breathe thee through our lips.
Even now I saw thy hue
In the maple's yellow tips,
When a leaf, so gay, so dear,
Fell—but come thou not more near.

Let us breathe thee through our lips!
Do thou enter in our eyes!
Touch us that we not forget:
Make us simple, still, and wise.
Circling us, thy finger slips—
Let us breathe thee through our lips.

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